

# **PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR INDIGENOUS AUTONOMY IN MEXICO**

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This paper addresses the issue of autonomous education in Chiapas, presenting experiences from a social movement perspective. In the multiethnic context of southeastern Mexico, the involvement of local authorities and indigenous families in school administration and curriculum planning is relatively limited. However, a very different situation occurs in areas where social movements are more active, such as in the context of educational participation in the autonomous Zapatista municipalities of Chiapas. In more than two decades of self-schooling experiences, the people from Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Chol, and Tojolabal communities in the Lacandon Jungle, the Highlands and the northern region, invariably place a high value on cultural and political knowledge and native languages in the classroom as part of the educational framework. Moreover, family involvement is thus fostered in the school curriculum and in everyday pedagogical practices.

The political actions of indigenous activists who are fighting for self-determination and autonomy in Chiapas and other Mexican states represent a profound questioning of the educational policies of the nation-state. Educational projects among the indigenous peoples from Zapatista autonomous municipalities challenge the institutionalized practices of the dominant actors in this field in Mexico and across Latin America and constitute one of the struggles of indigenous peoples to change the norms of educational policy. Furthermore, the autonomous experiences in the recovered lands of the Lacandon Jungle challenge the limitations of the national practices inherited from Mexican indigenism (i.e., assimilationism) as an ideology and policy of the State. How does a Mayan and peasant social movement radically transform school education in terms of pedagogical strategies linked to struggles for indigenous autonomy?

By reorienting learning practices to align with peasant, cultural, and indigenous struggles, this movement is building educational autonomy. Inside and outside schools, what is at stake is the genuine recognition given to different values and to local knowledge rooted in grassroots struggles. This place-based education generates educational strategies for indigenous autonomy in the everyday experiences of the Mayan Zapatistas of southeastern Mexico. These alternative strategies

are the result of ongoing confrontation with the Mexican State as well as community defense of their threatened lands and territories.<sup>1</sup> In the context in which cultural pluralism is a challenge in the transformation of formal education, autonomous communities are working together with their own educators to learn and teach. These tend to be constructivist and critical alternatives promoting multilingual, cooperative, and environmental learning.

## **PEASANT SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND EDUCATION FOR “GOOD GOVERNMENT”**

Since the emergence of schools in the twentieth century among the indigenous peoples of southeastern Mexico, the social construction of demands for education have been marked by an organizational context of negotiation and confrontation with the State. This involved the politicization of ethnic identities, contributing to the social appropriation of school education. Under the conditions created by political conflict, Mayan peoples have generated and extended new community schools experiences since the end of the 1980s, in accordance with continually renewed practices of self-government that give meaning to an alternative project they have assumed as their own autonomous undertaking. Through assemblies, the organized communities have acquired new capacities to participate actively in decision-making on local school policy. Education came to be appropriated by the communities through collective action, since they saw the necessity of implementing alternatives to the official education system of the “bad government.” Predating the uprising, the 1993 *First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle* included education among a list of eleven Zapatista demands. The demand for education meant having their own community-based schooling that originated in the cooperative aspirations of the Mayan peasants.<sup>2</sup>

1 → Bruno Baronnet, “Estrategias alternativas de educación en las luchas de los pueblos originarios en México,” *Educação & Sociedade* 38, no. 140 (2017): 689–704.

2 → Bruno Baronnet, “Autonomías y educación en Chiapas: prácticas políticas y pedagógicas en los pueblos zapatistas,” In *Pedagogías decoloniales: Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir*, ed. Catherine Walsh, (Quito: Abya-Yala, 2013), 304–329.

To generate their own system of *Educación Verdadera* (Real Education), between 1995 and 2001, the first task of the new Zapatista autonomous municipal council members was to dismiss and replace the “official teachers” with young community-supported members who would serve as “education promoters.” These promoters began to teach reading and writing to children between five- and twelve-years-old and were trained as multilingual educators in municipal centers across the autonomous regions. Small autonomous schools proliferated in all regions under Zapatista influence, created through the autonomous municipalities, with endogenous processes for training young teachers by non-professional Mayan educators who continued to live and work as peasants in their different multicultural regions.

The Zapatista project of de facto autonomy is a process of continuous construction carried out in accord with guidelines determined, first, by participatory assemblies at the community level, then, by rotating representation at the level of the autonomous municipalities and, since 2003, through five regional centers of self-government called *caracoles*, with their Good Government Councils (*Juntas de Buen Gobierno*) composed of men and women from different generations who are neither professional politicians nor bureaucrats, through the notion of horizontalism (“*mandar obedeciendo*”, or lead by obeying) “to prevent hierarchies of power, privilege, and vested interests”.<sup>3</sup> Direct participatory assemblies regularly choose leaders at the village level, representatives to the autonomous municipal councils, and a pool is elected from autonomous municipalities to serve rotating shifts on the five Good Government Councils.

In the everyday practices of autonomy in Zapatista indigenous communities, peasant families in assemblies choose members (usually young people) to receive training and offer services as “education promoters.” The communities commit themselves to allocating collective resources as necessary to support the maintenance of these young educators and to cover costs of their travel to training

3 → Richard Stalher-Sholk, “Constructing Autonomy. Zapatista Strategies of Indigenous Resistance in Mexico,” in *The New Global Politics: Global Social Movements in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Harry Vanden, Peter Funke, and Gary Prevost (New York: Routledge, 2017), 18.

workshops in each *caracol*.<sup>4</sup> The communities guide the promoters to shape pedagogical content in order to generate what they consider to be *Educación Verdadera* (“Real Education”). In the Zapatista’s sense, Real Education projects locate the generation of decolonial teaching and learning practices in time and space. Specifically, it provides a natural, cultural and territorial context for emancipation so that children grow up strengthened as members of the community.<sup>5</sup> Rather than depoliticizing and decontextualizing the pedagogical processes, rooting education in the regional context makes the school an experiential field for the dynamic interaction between values and knowledge based on local and global cultures alike. Each community educator is free to devise their own creative strategies through the autonomous municipality’s Real Education project. This self-governing framework supports the building of a community-based elementary education as opposed to both a centralized, top-down imposition emanating from an armed group manipulating the social bases that sustain their ranks and the old, centralized education model of the “bad government.”

Hundreds of autonomous schools in Zapatista territories are systematically staffed by members of Mayan rural communities, who are part of the rebel youth trained in the municipalities with the assistance of national and international volunteers, and also by other promoters from the communities who have more teaching experience.<sup>6</sup> These people do not receive a salary, but are fed and housed during their training and also receive support from their communities of origin during their period of service. Lesson plans and school programs are developed in collaboration with all members of the community, even if they do not have school-age children.

The educators of the autonomous communities, like the members of their governing structures, do volunteer work, typically on collective *milpas*, or cornfields. This requires consensus as to how the community will contribute, whether with labor or foodstuffs, to support those who must attend workshops or otherwise spend time in service to

4 → Stalher-Sholk, “Constructing Autonomy,” 18.

5 → Baronnet, “Autonomías y educación en Chiapas”.

6 → Bruno Baronnet, “Rebel Youth and Zapatista Autonomous Education,” *Latin American Perspectives* 35, no. 4 (2008): 112–124.

the people. The practice of rotating responsibilities gives everyone a chance to learn new skills and leadership without losing their connection to family and working life in the rural community. The current alternative practices are a product of self-managed educational policies by indigenous actors, inserted into structures of communal and regional power that are unrecognized and excluded from the framework of national education policies.

## **AN EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVE CHALLENGING THE SCHOOL OF “BAD GOVERNMENT”**

Even before 1994, massive and violent deficiencies in public education had long been a problem that indigenous organizations had denounced.<sup>7</sup> Following the uprising, Zapatista communities have constructed alternative schools and selected and trained their own educators with the goal of providing better services that would take into account the particular histories, cultures, and languages of the communities themselves.<sup>8</sup> In the autonomous municipalities, teachers come from the communities and not the cities, and they share with their students' families the same economic conditions and cultural practices. Through their popular assemblies, hundreds of Mayan communities support and assess the work of those who carry out the tasks of an education promoter. This relationship is different from the practice of indigenous teachers employed by the federal government, who wield the power to decide the content of the curriculum in a way that excludes the community and fails to recognize its needs. In 2007, Edgar, an autonomous education coordinator in the autonomous municipality of Francisco Villa, told me that they built their own schools “out of necessity” because they distrusted the official education system:

We did not learn anything about our customs; the ideas that

7 → Horacio Gómez Lara, *Indígenas, mexicanos y rebeldes. Procesos educativos y resignificación de identidades en los Altos de Chiapas*, (Mexico: CESMECA, Juan Pablos, 2011), 465.

8 → Neil Harvey, “Practicing Autonomy: Zapatismo and Decolonial Liberation,” *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 11, no. 1 (2016): 1-24.

they brought were only ideas from the outside. It wasn't like what we are doing right now, with our own customs, creating education in our community; it wasn't like this before.

Edgar has now accumulated pedagogical experience through practice and has co-constructed knowledge about inventing particular strategies for Real Education. Taking into account the demands for decolonizing the construction of distinct knowledges and practices in the field of politics,<sup>9</sup> Zapatista communities construct and produce according to their political and cultural identities and teaching practices. According to Peter Brown<sup>10</sup>, who shared the solidarity experiences of Schools for Chiapas (San Diego, California), the younger Zapatistas who serve as autonomous authorities attended autonomous schools, where the classroom is an experience of democracy, of alternative forms of learning to change the world and to change themselves. Nowadays, each Zapatista village has a primary school and each region has a middle school. For example, seventeen secondary schools are functioning in the communities of four autonomous municipalities of the *caracol* of Morelia. Recently, at more than a dozen of these autonomous boarding schools, multispecies “food forests” have been created, which feature not only fruits, nuts, berries, grasses, root crops, and animal forage, but also traditional medicinal plants.

The educational strategies of the Zapatista people for managing schools challenge Mexican state policy. The educational projects of politically organized indigenous peoples in regions such as Las Cañadas are real, political strategies for indigenous autonomy in education. Alternative multilingual teacher recruitment and training practices represent new challenges to public policies. Social appropriation of schooling is inscribed in the struggle for greater control over educational processes at the communal level. Indigenous people in these multiethnic regions transform their educational reality at the same time as they generate proposals that tend towards autonomy with regard to

9 → Mariana Mora Bayo, *Kuxlejal Politics, Indigenous Autonomy, Race and Decolonizing Research Zapatista Communities*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017), 288.

10 → Editor's note: This is a reference to an oral comment made by Peter Brown during the 2017 LAPES conference.

the State. This contributes to the implementation of indigenous administration and curriculum management strategies. Such experiences of “pedagogy from below” are not simply pedagogical struggles over the curriculum and educational policies of the State, but also direct actions that create and implement alternative educational models, often in reconfigured social spaces and in social movements increasingly focused on horizontalism in their own practices.<sup>11</sup>

Undeniably, the Zapatista movement of autonomous education is an endogenous base from which to build political autonomy. From the perspective of Mayan activists, all members of the indigenous community promote education; they often participate directly, through a system of community labor and assemblies, in building schools, choosing autonomous education promoters, and supporting and training these promoters. Classroom content is proposed and discussed by family members, educators, and community authorities. Despite their everyday challenges, political autonomy in education guarantees the specific organizational identity of indigenous communities through the definition and implementation of their own educational activities.

The Zapatista practice of autonomy has included replacing the central government’s education system with alternative, community-controlled education, alongside autonomous health care, governance, communication, administration of justice, and promotion of sustainable, collective models of economic production. This participatory process of building political autonomies is itself didactic, creating spaces for community members to learn by doing, while at the same time offering a model that has served as an inspiration to other movements.<sup>12</sup> It is thus possible to differentiate the “political pedagogy” of the Zapatista’s alternative community schools from the “pedagogical politics” represented by the exercise of de facto autonomy.

This alternative education model reinforces cultural and political identity, as a strategic component of the project for claiming collective

11 → Stalher-Sholk, “Constructing Autonomy,” 18.

12 → Richard Stalher-Sholk and Bruno Baronnet, “‘La escuela es la comunidad’: Luchas indígenas y autonomía en México,” In *Saberes sociales para la justicia social: educación y escuela en América Latina*, ed. Sebastián Plá and Sandra Rodríguez (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional Pedagógica, La Carreta Editores, 2017), 99–135.



rights. Social spaces are reconfigured in ways that directly challenge the individualistic, neoliberal models of education and society, and that recognize social context in the learning process. The Zapatista movement explicitly identifies the integral connection between school and the lived experience of diverse Mayan communities, conceiving education as part of a participatory process of social transformation. The movement recognizes that the content and organization of autonomous education play a key role in the formation of new social subjects.

In Mexico, the indigenous struggles that nourish the construction of various forms of political autonomy have proven to be powerful vectors for socio-educational transformation. These struggles contribute to redefining the production of knowledge and the education of indigenous peoples through the principles and actions of the indigenous peasant families that form the base of the Zapatista movement, underscoring the idea that “the school is the community”:

We want to see and struggle for the school to be the entire community, because the community is where the people's knowledge and their truth are. We want all members of the collective to become the school and to grow. The school is the community because it educates us from the time we are little, and as our parents say, it tells us how to do the right thing. That's why together the whole community should build education, so we will be respected by all, and it will be useful to all.<sup>13</sup>

The Zapatista autonomous schools aim to provide children with the psychological tools to resist low-intensity warfare and reinforce their sense of belonging to the collective construction of autonomy and social agency.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the pedagogy within the schools themselves, the movement has created new roles particularly for young people. It

13 → Autonomous Rebel Municipality Ricardo Flores Magón, *La Educación Verdadera* (Chiapas, Mexico, 2001).

14 → Angélica Rico, “Educate in Resistance: The Autonomous Zapatista Schools,” *ROAR Magazine* (January 2, 2014); Kathia Núñez Patiño and Bruno Baronnet, “Infancias indígenas y construcción de identidades,” *Argumentos* 30, no. 84 (2017): 17–36.

is also gradually breaking down gender barriers to serve the community as promoters of education, community-oriented health care that recovers ancestral knowledge of herbal medicine, sustainable agriculture, communication, justice or human rights, giving the construction of autonomy a concrete decolonial sense.<sup>15</sup> The autonomous councils and boards of self-government also serve an educational purpose in this movement for social justice. Indeed, this participatory model of radical democracy turns the organization of the social movement itself into a kind of school,<sup>16</sup> in which the processes of teaching, learning, and community progress are a responsibility shared by everyone. As key actors in this education “for autonomy,” the promoters participate in the construction of a “*habitus* of rebellion,” which is “fed by the practices and forms of thinking expressed in images, texts and discussions, while these schemes, once produced and internalized, become reproducers of rebellious practice and thinking.”<sup>17</sup> Likewise, the training of autonomous educators feeds back into the interaction with parents and elders who help and advise.

In Chiapas, consolidation of an alternative school project based on principles of “good government” is sustained by the collective efforts of the members of each Zapatista community. These are mainly subsistence communities that strive for self-sufficiency, and it is not always easy to recruit local young people as educators in villages that refuse the assistance of the “bad government.” Another challenge is that women and the elderly in the community need to attend meetings dedicated to education. However, both of these groups place high value on a curriculum for building autonomy, which they call “teaching the truth.” This curriculum can include stories, locally rooted knowledge and cultural values, as well as ethical codes and standards of conduct. For the schoolchildren, this approach validates the knowledge derived from everyday life and the collective imaginaries of the Zapatista bases.

15 → Melissa Forbis, “After Autonomy: The Zapatistas, Insurgent Indigeneity, and Decolonization,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 5 (2015): 1-20; Mora Bayo, *Kuxlejal Politics*, 288.

16 → Stahler-Sholk and Baronnet, “La escuela es la comunidad,” 112.

17 → Gómez Lara, *Indígenas, mexicanos y rebeldes. Procesos educativos y resignificación de identidades en los Altos de Chiapas*, 325.

## FOCUSING PEDAGOGICALLY ON POLITICAL DEMANDS

Teams of education promoters in autonomous communities learn from each other through innovative ways of articulating cultural knowledge that are both politically significant and relevant to the families of indigenous activists and peasants. Parents and grandparents positively value the fact that children learn confidence, the history of the settlement of the Lacandon Jungle, and about the collective rights of peoples. Learning how to fight injustice and defend themselves politically is an objective that families consider essential.

Teaching and learning methods and the curriculum are inherently political. Specifically, they promote the defense of their lands, culture, collective rights, and the environment. The curriculum's thematic axes are the principal demands for democracy, freedom and social justice, as well as specific needs locally identified and resolved through participatory-democratic assemblies of all the families. In fact, the official school curriculum is not removed entirely from these alternative schools, but is resignified through local symbols, such that national and international heroes share space with agrarian leaders, the history of the Spanish colonizers is taught alongside the history of the Tzeltal, and the values of individualism, competition, consumerism and private property are seriously questioned and replaced with the values from the oral tradition, of reciprocal relationships, and of community in relation to its immediate reality,<sup>18</sup>. Promoters of Real Education are not trained to simply teach children literacy, but also acquire political-pedagogical tools to help plant the seeds of critical consciousness. In the words of Hortencia,<sup>19</sup> a Tzeltal promoter of Real Education:

Our education is about having a dignified struggle and one heart, so that we can walk together in the same direction. We believe that education is not only about teaching literacy and numeracy, but also about solving problems between our peoples, about how to defend ourselves, about our history and how to keep on fighting.

18 → Rico, "Educate in Resistance".

19 → Ibid.

Education promoters focus on the political demands of the Zapatista movement as themes generative of knowledge in the sense of a critical and popular pedagogy, teaching about cultural differences, from asking questions to combining popular and scientific knowledge.<sup>20</sup> From the perspective of Zapatista families, it seems relevant and necessary to link classroom lessons to historical living conditions in the time of peonage on the *haciendas*, from the colonization of the Lacandon Jungle, through the decades of struggle for land rights, to the current repression of the movement. As a result of the pragmatism shared by the promoters and Zapatista authorities, teaching practices observed in the modest classrooms of the rebel communities are extremely eclectic. Indeed, political autonomy favors the collective and permanent redefinition of priorities and educational needs, with the self-evaluation of the issues under local control.

In the words of Joshua, a Tzeltal *campesino* nominated by his community to be “in charge” of promoting education in a new town on recovered land in the municipality of Francisco Gómez, “it is us, ourselves, who are going to prepare ourselves. No one will come anymore to teach us, but we will educate ourselves.” The Zapatista educators emphasize political, cultural, and environmental issues for a contextualized learning that is meaningful for children and their families. As Joshua said:

When I teach, we look at the theme of nature, what is around us, how we live, how we can use the forest, what is wood. All this is discussed with the children. They also learn how to gather wood because sometimes they just cut it all down, and that just screws it up. You need to plant more trees, because if we destroy nature, what will the children have when they grow up. We see this at school too. Sometimes, I have them make a little map of the community.

This interview with Joshua was held in January 2007 in Francisco

20 → Paulo Freire and Antonio Faundez, *Por una pedagogía de la pregunta. Crítica a una educación basada en respuestas a preguntas inexistentes* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2013), 224.

Gómez, when he was an education promoter. Now, he works as a peasant and his eldest son is serving as an educator in a small community school located in the midst of the recovered land. In order to train future leaders in autonomous development, members of community aim to guide the processes of integral education, inculcating respect for the elders and their values, cultural traditions, and collective memories that shape the principles that guide contemporary political projects. Community elders, even those not directly involved in Zapatista militancy, play a key role in education as the bearers of knowledge and values that the schools reinforce in young people. Recognizing the wisdom of the elders means adhering to value codes and patterns of behavior that shape both individual and collective work. The school thus represents a space for socializing values that transcend the family, because the transformation of this space alters the social imaginary and produces new collective memories.

Through processes and resources emerging from each community assembly, each school has its own unique organizational and pedagogical characteristics, although not all have a written educational program. In the pursuit of regional self-management of their community projects, the educational processes in these communities are committed to the ideal of decolonizing the school culture previously based on methods, plans, and programs that discriminated against indigenous cultures. The political-educational practices of each rebel municipality have enabled the development, in a direct and imaginative way, of a regional project that is counter-hegemonic to the state. Their pedagogical work is legitimized through the daily activities of community actors and representatives who guide, monitor, and evaluate the activities of young educators, who are, in turn, accountable for their work to regular assemblies of families. Far from being the mechanical application of a rigid model uniformly imposed by the Zapatista leadership on their bases, this radical educational autonomy has generated the social appropriation and reinvention of the school, arising from their own strategies of communal government, in service of the aspirations of the communities.

The political-educational practices of the Autonomous Municipalities

in Chiapas resignify the school, focusing teaching towards the goal of learning for Zapatismo demands. That is, the objective is to learn to govern themselves, in accordance with the emancipatory project pursued through critical pedagogies created in an indigenous context. Zapatista innovations contribute to democratizing decision-making processes around education issues by prioritizing the assembly processes of direct democracy that govern the autonomous communities and guide teaching practices. This tends to facilitate the learning of values and norms in the classroom that coincide with the collective imaginary of the autonomy project, transmitting the identity markers of a peasant, Mayan, and militant population.

Researching childhood in the context of cultural diversity, empirical researchers consider the contributions that Mayan communities make in order to encourage the children's participation in activities that promote community, particularly those expressed in the autonomous schools.<sup>21</sup> In addition to promoting literacy in native languages in several hundred primary schools, the Zapatista socio-educational movement itself represents a space for learning through intercultural dialogue and training practices for building autonomy. In other words, the exercise of educational self-management implies a permanent re-training of individuals to exercise rights and duties of self-government, thus strengthening community democracy. The exercise of autonomy itself teaches an alternative model of everyday practices and social relations in a context of great social inequalities, lack of available resources, persistent government and paramilitary repression, and penetration of neoliberal market forces that act to dismantle the social peasant economy.

This pedagogical focus on indigenous demands takes place in a peasant social movement for land and dignity. In recent decades, Mayan Zapatistas have aspired to develop, plan, and implement their own communal political education, based on pedagogical principles generated through struggles and social movements. To the extent that they challenge national educational policies, these autonomous projects also challenge the State's monopoly control over educational

21 → Núñez Patiño and Baronnet, "Infancias indígenas," 17–36.

systems, raising the question of whether this is the genesis of a new diversity of regional educational policies adopted in the course of the struggles of indigenous movements in defense of local resources and dignity. These autonomous territories have embarked on a plethora of school reinventions and curricular experiments of educational non-submission. Some of these experiments are examples of critical intercultural education, developed from multi-ethnic, political autonomy-building processes embodied by critical social transformation projects seeking to destabilize the neocolonial order. These protest experiences against the neocolonial and monocultural order are intended as decolonial alternatives to the State and national education policies, but, due to a lack of resources, they are often drawn into fierce political struggles for recognition by the State apparatus that allocates material and symbolic resources.

Several educational initiatives and indigenous autonomy processes in Mexico have contributed to radical democratization projects in culturally diverse territories, through struggles inspired by Zapatismo that redefine relationships between social actors and the State. Critiques by radical educators of various forms of neoliberal multiculturalism, such as the Mexican variant of *neoindigenismo*, focus on the educational policies of the centralized, nation-state system that purports to be plural and inclusive but in fact reinforces colonial hierarchies and structural discrimination. However, in the multiethnic territories of Chiapas and elsewhere in Mexico, the political and social processes of building autonomy in education together with the everyday practices of autonomy movements, which themselves represent pedagogies of resistance, contribute to the emergence of new collective subjectivities.<sup>22</sup> The history of critical pedagogies for the decolonization of thinking and the collective imagination in Zapatista autonomous education serves as both an illustration and a powerful inspiration for innovation in the schools and educational workshops among other resistant, indigenous peoples: for example, in the Purépecha municipality of Cherán in Michoacán and in communities in Oaxaca and Guerrero. In effect, the Zapatista movement has inspired and instigated numerous decolonial

22 → Stahler-Sholk and Baronnet. "La escuela es la comunidad," 115.

processes in Mexico, influencing diverse expressions of non-submission and of dignity.

## CONCLUSION

Starting from educators' exercise of local control, the Zapatistas are nurturing an indigenous proposal for educational autonomy that questions the domination institutionalized in the school, which is backed by the State as the sole source of teaching in the locality. Instead, literacy and education are the responsibility of local community organizations loyal to a regional political project. As a meaningful pedagogical strategy, autonomous communities are committed to the search for pragmatic solutions to the challenge of taking and exercising control over the schools in their territories and disputing the hegemony of the State in producing the curriculum. In daily educational practice, autonomous educators act toward this end, although they do not pretend to be professionals in either education or politics. At a societal level, the Mayan rebels' emancipatory horizon represents a greater challenge to the legitimacy of the national, educational power of the Mexican State, which cannot allow *campesino* and indigenous municipalities and organizations to attain greater margins of control over personal learning and pedagogical orientation. In the heat of the social movement, planning for an emancipatory education rests on the capacity of subjects to transform the established order, partly entrusting this liberatory objective to the school model advanced by the political organization. In this sense, the most recent political campaign of Mexico's Indigenous Council of Government demonstrates that, in the words of their spokesperson *Marichuy*, "the time has come for the people to flower." And this in the pedagogical sense, too. ■