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# The Struggle to Exist: Indigenous Movements and Resistance in Ecuador and Mexico during the Age of Globalization.

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Running Head: The Struggle to Exist: Indigenous Movements & Resistance in Ecuador and Mexico

The Struggle to Exist: Indigenous Movements and Resistance in Ecuador and Mexico during the Age of Globalization.

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Concordia University-Portland  
December 1, 2016

Presented to The Graduate Program in College of Theology, Arts & Sciences in Partial fulfillment of M.A. in International Development and Service

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**Abstract**

In this current globalized world, indigenous populations, marginalized throughout history, face an increasing loss of their land and culture. In response to this homogenization of their culture, loss of their land, and the continuing lack of their political and economic rights, indigenous movements in Ecuador and Mexico rose up in the 1990s demanding an end to this marginalization. Through work with key allies and members of these communities, this investigation intends to understand and elucidate the indigenous perspective of the effects of western culture and globalization on these indigenous peoples, and their ways of resisting and living in this globalized world.

Keywords: indigenous, Amazon, globalization, Zapatistas, indigeneity, resistance

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### **Abbreviations**

FEI- Ecuadorian Federation of Indians

CONAIE- Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador

ECUARUNARI- Confederation of Peoples of Kichwa Nationality

CONFENAIE- Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon

COICE- Confederation of Indigenous Organizations of the Ecuadorian Coast

EZLN- Zapatista Army of National Liberation

WTO- World Trade Organization

IMF- International Monetary Fund

WB- World Bank

SAP- Structural Adjustment Program

UN- United Nations

PRI- Institutional Revolutionary Party

PAN- National Action Party

TNC- Transnational Corporation

NAFTA- North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement

OPEC- Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

FOIN- Federation of Indian Organizations of Napo

OPIP- Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza

CODENPE - Council for the Development of Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Indigenous nationalities throughout history have consistently been one of the most marginalized populations all over the world. Currently 370 million indigenous peoples are living in some 90 countries that reside in areas where intensive natural resource extraction occurs, making them more susceptible to displacement (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009). Indigenous peoples in Latin America make up a significant portion of the world's indigenous population today and have been struggling for their rights throughout history, whether it has been against colonialism, the hacienda<sup>1</sup> system, colonists, trans-national corporations, or the State.

### Statement of Problem

Ecuador and Mexico, which have large indigenous populations, also have some of the strongest or most recognizable indigenous movements in the world. While indigenous movements and resistance in Mexico and Ecuador have had a long history, the neoliberal policies implemented in the late 1980s and early 1990s politicized and motivated these movements to unite over the demand for the survival and recognition of their ethnic identity, culture, and territory. (Sawyer, 2004; Yashar, 2005; Valdivia, 2007). In 1990, the indigenous movement in Ecuador enacted a massive national uprising, or *levantamiento*, which brought the country to a standstill and thrust their demands for their rights into the national and international spotlight. Likewise, an armed uprising occurred in the region of Chiapas, Mexico, by an indigenous armed leftist group calling themselves the Zapatistas in 1994 on the same day the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, the United States, and Canada

took effect, bringing international attention to indigenous movements, demands, and their various modes of resistance.

These indigenous resistance movements against globalization forces that threatened their right to exist as indigenous peoples, to their cultural, economic, and ethnic rights and their right to autonomy and territory, continue today. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to determine and analyze the effects of globalization and western culture on indigenous peoples from an indigenous perspective and elucidate the themes, demands, and modes of survival/resistance of certain indigenous movements in Mexico and Ecuador.

### **Definition of Terms/Concepts**

It is important to establish the different concepts and terms that are used extensively in this paper. In particular, the definitions of the terms “*indigenous*”, “*globalization*”, and “*neoliberalism*.” These terms are defined below:

The term “indigenous” is a term that is still under debate as either peoples or groups that self-identify as indigenous have used it has been imposed on certain peoples by society. For the focus of this paper the concept of “indigenous” will use the definition from the UN Report “Study of the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations” made by Special Rapporteur, Jose Martínez Cobo, in 1981:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those, which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.

This historical continuity may consist of the continuation, for an extended period reaching into the present of one or more of the following factors:

- a) Occupation of ancestral lands, or at least of part of them;
- b) Common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands;
- c) Culture in general, or in specific manifestations (such as religion, living under a tribal system, membership of an indigenous community, dress, means of livelihood, lifestyle, etc.);
- d) Language (whether used as the only language, as mother-tongue, as the habitual means of communication at

home or in the family, or as the main, preferred, habitual, general or normal language);  
e) Residence on certain parts of the country, or in certain regions of the world;  
f) Other relevant factors. (Cobo, J. M, UN Special Rapporteur, 1981).

Similarly, the exact definitions of the terms “globalization” and “neoliberalism,” are also highly contested and for the purpose of this paper will be defined as follows:

By “globalization”, this paper will be referring to economic globalization or global capitalism and the extension of global markets (Birdsall, 2005).

By the term “neoliberal”, “neoliberalism”, or “neoliberal policies” this paper will be referring to the ideology behind economic liberalization policies that are geared to open an economy to the international market, remove barriers to trade, the privatization of state-run industries and the labor force, elimination of most state subsidies, deregulation, and downsizing of many social policies, and withdrawal of the state. Also known as structural adjustment programs (SAP) or the “Washington Consensus” (Bartra & Otero, 2005).

## **Background & Description of Problem**

### *Indigenous Regions and Nationalities in Ecuador and Mexico*

There are 14 different indigenous nationalities living in the area of Ecuador. These 14 groups make up 30 to 38 percent of Ecuador’s population and can be separated into three regions: The Coast (la Costa), the highlands (la Sierra), and the Amazon (la Oriente) (Yashar, 2005; Indigenous Work Group for Indigenous Affairs [IWGIA], 2016).<sup>2</sup> The majority of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador are located in the highlands and the Amazon regions. This research study will be focusing mostly on the Amazon region in Ecuador. Mexico has an indigenous population of around 25.7 million people (which comprises around 21.5% of Mexico’s population), with 56 different indigenous languages being spoken amongst them (INEGI, 2015).<sup>3</sup> The region in Mexico that this study will be focused on will be the region of Chiapas, which is a region in Mexico with one of the largest indigenous populations (National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples [CDI], 2015).

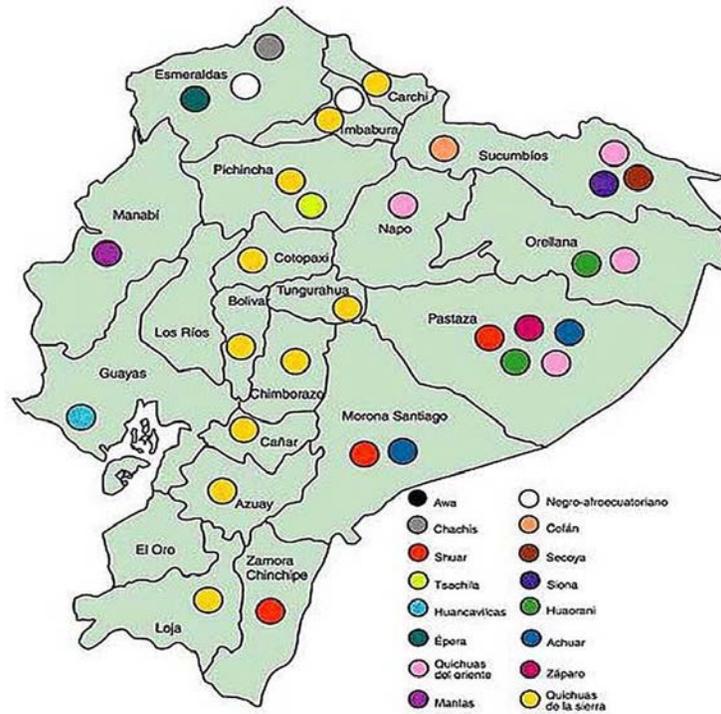


Figure 1: Map of indigenous nationalities in Ecuador<sup>4</sup>



Figure 2: Map of indigenous nationalities of Mexico<sup>5</sup>

*History of Indigenous Movements in Ecuador and Mexico**Ecuador*

In Ecuador, indigenous peoples have been subjected to colonialism, imperialism, marginalization, and local oppression throughout history. Indigenous resistance to these forces has always been present, but it was their alliance with urban leftists in the 1920s and 1930s that strengthened their movement (Becker, 2008, Yashar, 2005). An important aspect of the early indigenous struggle in the 1920s and 1930s was that the Ecuadorian indigenous movement became politicized as Indians rather than peasants (Becker, 2011). While the leftists were pushing for a class-based struggle, the indigenous movement insisted on having an ethnic and a class-based struggle. This alliance between leftists and the indigenous movement led to the creation of the group Federación Ecuatoriano de Indios (FEI) in 1944 that became one of the first major players and organizers in the indigenous movement (Becker, 2008).

The FEI is generally seen as one of the first national, large scale, and foundational indigenous groups in Ecuador. This was also the first time that the indigenous movement in Ecuador moved from a local to a national strategy. Together, FEI and leftist parties were able to mobilize huge groups of people. Leftists and Indians continued to struggle against the oligarchy and the governments in Ecuador but by the 1970s FEI began to lose power and legitimacy (Yashar, 2005).

By the 1970s, the indigenous movement pivoted and decided to create its own regional organizations that focused more on their ethnicity as an Indian. One of the first groups to do this was ECUARUNARI, which formed in 1972 to represent the highlands (Sierra) federation of indigenous peoples. While an ethnic emphasis dominated the organization in the first few years (1972-77), a class-based agenda dominated its focus in 1977-85, with Ecuarunari finally

switching back to an ethnic based focus in 1985 (Yashar, 2005). In 1980, CONFENAIE formed, representing the indigenous nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon. These groups centered their demands on their right to territory, culture, and self-determination. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, indigenous activists from Ecuarunari and Confenaie met to discuss a national federation. Finally, at an important meeting in 1986, Ecuarunari, Confenaie, and a small group representing indigenous organizations of the Ecuador coast, COICE, joined together to form the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador [CONAIE] (Jameson, 2011).

The building and merging of the national federation Conaie required a lot of discussion and compromises that rested on the existence of networks previously created by leftists, church groups, and NGOs (Yashar, 2005; Becker, 2008). With the implementation of neoliberal policies in the 1980s, which directly challenged the land base on which indigenous communities equated their culture and indigenous identity, the Andean conception of land (the indigenous organizations from the Sierra had a more class-based approach) moved closer to their Amazonian counterparts' ethnic centered idea of land. The neoliberal policies that were implemented politicized and motivated the indigenous movement in Ecuador to unite over the demand for the survival and recognition of their ethnic identity and territory (Valdivia, 2005; Perrault, 2001; Yashar, 2007; Zamosc, 1994).

The indigenous struggle for these rights coalesced in their resistance to the neoliberal regimes in the 1990s, demanding from the state the recognition of these rights and working with social movements in order to enact massive national uprisings (Sawyer, 2004; Chong, 2010). Five years after the first huge uprising in 1990, the indigenous movement decided to form a political arm in order to develop an alternative medium of resistance, calling it Pachakutik (Becker, 2011). Pachakutik sponsored numerous candidates in local, regional, and national elections; although

their legitimacy took a major hit after supporting the Presidency of Lucio Gutierrez who reneged on his promises and implemented neoliberal policies soon after he was elected (Jameson, 2011).

Raphael Correa was elected President of Ecuador in 2006 and declared that he would make Ecuador a post-neoliberal State. Initially the indigenous movement allied themselves with Correa and achieved some successes. As an example, they successfully lobbied to add the phrase of Ecuador being a plurinational state to the 2008 constitution (Dosh & Kligerman, 2009). As well, Ecuador signed the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [UNDRIP] (2007) and the International Labor Organization [ILO] convention 169 which declared numerous rights for indigenous peoples (ILO, 1985). However, since then Correa has gradually moved to the right politically and has extended the activity of extractive industries in the Ecuadorian Amazon in order to fund his social programs. This has caused the indigenous movement in Ecuador to become one of his biggest rivals, and in response, Correa has clamped down and tried to marginalize the indigenous and social movements that are opposing his expansion of extractive activity as well as his authoritarian and demeaning rhetoric (Dosh & Kligerman, 2009).

### *Zapatismo in Mexico*

NAFTA and its liberalization of the economy encountered vast resistance in the indigenous and peasant community. One of the most famous examples of indigenous resistance to the Mexican government and its trade policies came from the group Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), more commonly referred to as the Zapatistas. The EZLN formed as an indigenous resistance movement on November 17, 1983 with 3 non-indigenous Marxists joining with 3 indigenous activists in the southern state of Chiapas (an area that has a high percentage of indigenous peoples and also a high percentage of people living with extreme poverty) (Morton,

2002; Ramírez, 2008; Muñoz, 2006). In Chiapas, many indigenous communities, in addition to living with abject poverty, had to deal with repression from police, soldiers, and paramilitary groups that were paid for by local landlords or corrupt PRI officials (Bartra & Otero, 2005).

The Zapatistas spent the next 10 years forming ties and developing trust with the indigenous community in the area. Decisions were made by community will, and after a community decision for armed rebellion was decided in late 1993, the Zapatistas revealed themselves to Mexico and the world on January 1, 1994 by taking over numerous towns in Chiapas, Mexico, and declaring themselves an autonomous State (Muñoz, 2006; Ramírez, 2008; Morton, 2002; Stahler-Sholk, 2007). The Mexican government responded by sending in armed vehicles and troops and bombing the area with air strikes, but due to massive international and domestic pressure, the violence subsided and relative calm ensued with limited casualties.

In April 1995, the San Andres Peace Accords between the Mexican government and the EZLN (the military arm of the Zapatistas) and the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee (CRIC, the political arm of the Zapatistas) were started and were mediated by Bishop Ruiz of San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas. President Zedillo of the PRI (then the ruling party of Mexico) rejected these accords in 1996, and the Zapatista communities have been constantly faced with harassment, occupation, and violence from federal, state, paramilitary, and other armed forces since. President Fox of the PAN party, the first person elected President outside the PRI party since the Mexican Revolution of 1917, was elected in 2000 and removed the military checkpoints that had surrounded the Zapatista areas in Chiapas since the uprising in 1994. However, the indigenous communities in Chiapas still have been subjected to constant surveillance, manipulation, violence, and intimidation (Stahler-Sholk, 2007, Ramírez, 2008).

In response to the rejection by the Mexican state of the Zapatista and indigenous communities' demands during the San Andres Accords, the Zapatistas decided to withdraw and make their own autonomous communities in certain regions of Chiapas, Mexico. They used social media and the image and musings of one of their charismatic leaders, Subcomandante Marcos, to stay in the international and national spotlight. This prevented the Mexican state from wiping them out as the Mexican government and its international allies and financial backers did not want bloodshed to cause an international backlash immediately after the signing of NAFTA (Morton, 2002; Ramírez, 2008).

In December of 1994, the Zapatistas created 38 indigenous municipalities in Chiapas and in 2003 changed their community and political structure by creating 5 autonomous regions called *caracoles* (a Mayan term that means conch shell) (Ramírez, 2008). This model, although a work in progress that was constantly changing and evolving, created a semblance of self-sufficiency for Zapatista communities that involved all aspects of normal life, from education, healthcare, agriculture, to artisanal collectives (Stahler-Sholk, 2007; Muñoz Ramírez, 2008). The autonomous project of Zapatismo has been constantly changing and improvising since their appearance in 1994, and continues today.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to elucidate and promulgate the indigenous perspective of how globalization has affected indigenous populations and their ways of life and how various indigenous movements have resisted or reacted to it. This thesis aims to identify as well as compare and contrast the central themes and demands of both movements in their own words, to analyze, and to illuminate their recent attempts to create an alternative model of existing and surviving in this globalized world.

### **Research Question**

This investigation will analyze the effects of globalization and western culture on indigenous peoples from an indigenous perspective and elucidate the themes and demands of the indigenous movements in Mexico and Ecuador, in particular the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico, and the indigenous nationalities in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

This will be an inductive study that will focus on the research question listed above. The following main objectives used to address my research question are as follows:

1. To determine, from an indigenous perspective, how globalization and western culture/intervention has affected indigenous populations, particular indigenous populations in Ecuador and Mexico.
2. To identify and elucidate the central demands of the Zapatistas and the indigenous movement in Ecuador in their own words.
3. To compare and contrast the similarities and differences of discourse, resistance, daily life, and methods of decolonization among the two movements and how each group understands and identifies with the central themes that come out of these movements.

### **Rationale of the Study**

With this research, I hope to be able to offer a window into both movements and to assist in better evaluating how globalization has affected indigenous populations and to better understand their needs and struggles and how their processes of resistance and surviving has constantly changed and evolved over the past 30 years. I hope that this research will also be used to draw public attention to the demands of indigenous peoples that are still not being met.

### *Assumptions*

The following assumptions were made in this research study:

1. Those who participated in interviews provided honest and accurate responses to the questions.
2. The participant observation done by the researcher accurately depicts normal life and practices of the two indigenous movements under observation.
3. Participant anonymity, if requested, was maintained throughout the duration of the study.

### *Significance*

This research will be critical in understanding and identifying the needs, modes of resistance, and the daily lives of the Zapatistas and the indigenous movement in Ecuador. Although numerous seminal research studies have been published regarding the Zapatistas and the indigenous movement in Ecuador, there has been no recent studies of these two movements. Although H. Klein did a significant work on women in the Zapatista movement in 2015, there has been no comparative analysis of these two movements from a researcher that has lived, worked, and/or talked with members of both communities. This is significant as it allows the communities themselves to explain to the public their demands, their methods of resistance, and ways of cultural survival.

### *Strengths*

Using the gatekeeper Mexico Solidarity Network, I lived, learned, worked, and observed a Zapatista community, which is a significant strength of this study. The Zapatistas, while peaceful, are still armed, are extremely reclusive, and are a declared terrorist organization by the Mexican State. This causes them to be a very inaccessible and isolated community. While they do occasionally take tourists around their community in a very fast 15-minute silent tour, very

few outsiders are allowed to learn and live with them for a significant amount of time. Likewise, using the networks provided by the Ecuadorian NGO Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales (CDES), I was able to observe and discuss with numerous indigenous leaders and members of the national federation Conaie and with the regional Amazonian federation, Confenaie. Finally, this study benefited from the work of key ethnographers and researchers that have done significant research related to this study and were used as key advisors in the research process.

### *Limitations*

One of the key limitations in this study is the length. Only two weeks were spent in the Zapatista community and only 5 months were spent in Ecuador doing fieldwork. Due to the lengthy process of gaining trust and identifying willing participants, more interviews and participant observation could have been done from both movements if longer time was allowed for this study. Also, having the presence of a white westerner either conversing with, interviewing, observing, or listening to members from these communities will automatically change the discourse, actions, and interactions with the community. This positionality could possibly make it difficult to identify which discourses and ways of life are “authentic” or if they are constructed to varying degrees to that particular audience.

### **Organization of Remainder of Study**

Chapter 2 of this thesis will be dedicated to the review of the literature concerned with the issue of colonialism, decolonization, globalization, and their impact on indigenous peoples & nationalities. This literature review will also study and compare the various studies that have done investigations and research on the Zapatista movement and the indigenous movement in Ecuador. This will give the reader a better and more complete understanding of what is the current stance of these issues in academia and in the international community. Chapter 3 will explain the methodology followed in this research study. Chapter 4 will be an analysis of the field research and research data acquired on the topics that are being considered in this paper. Moreover, the last two chapters, Chapter 5 and 6 will contain the discussion, conclusion and final remarks.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

This literature review will cover the impact of globalization and western intervention on indigenous peoples and cultures and specifically their impact on particular indigenous groups in Mexico and Ecuador. In addition, this chapter will review the most significant literature concerning the Zapatista movement and the indigenous movement in Ecuador with regards to their ways of resistance, their demands, their interaction with the state and other non-governmental actors, and their processes of cultural survival and decolonization. The first topic that will be covered will focus on the legacy and effect of colonialism in Latin America and how the typical Latin American state then progressed into a corporatist model with an assimilationist relationship in regards to their indigenous peoples. Then this literature review will then provide a basic introduction to neoliberalism and its effects, following with a more in-depth analysis over the implementation of neoliberal policies in Latin America, with a particular focus on Mexico and Ecuador, and how those implemented neoliberal policies affected indigenous populations. Finally, this review of literature will analyze the current research that has been done in regards to the Zapatistas and the indigenous movement in Ecuador in response to these processes.

### **Globalization and Western impact on Indigenous peoples and cultures**

A number of policymakers, researchers, as well as western and indigenous scholars have looked at the impact of globalization on indigenous populations. While the overwhelming majority have concluded that these policies have had a negative effect (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Stahler-Stolk, 2007; Jung, 2003; Harvey, 2005; Reyes & Kaufman, 2011; Morton, 2002; Otero, 2004; Fenelon & Hall, 2008; Sawyer, 2002; Yashar, 2005) some have identified positive

effects (Hale, 2004; Weland, 2004). This study will focus on the effects that globalization (defined in this paper as global capitalism) has had on indigenous populations from an indigenous perspective. However in order to fully understand these processes, one must first look at the evolution and the legacy of colonialism and imperialism and the impact that they have had on the indigenous populations as well.

### *Colonialism and indigenous peoples in Latin America*

Colonialism, the spread of European colonial empires to non-industrialized and indigenous populations around the globe through the acts of domination, subjugation, and genocide, started in the 16th century and continued until the 19th century. The colonial period in Latin America roughly lasted from 1521-1810. From the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores in 1510 to the year 1650, there was a reduction of 90% of the indigenous population in Latin America (Mabry, 2002). Although most of these deaths were from diseases that the colonizers inadvertently brought with them, the indigenous population was also subjected to acts of slavery, subordination, servitude, violence, oppression, and genocide by their conquerors. Frantz Fanon, one of the world's most famous scholars on colonization and decolonization, framed colonialism in this way, "Colonialism is not merely satisfied with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today" (Fanon, 1963). In Decolonising the Mind, Ngugi wa Thi'ongo of Kenya refers to "colonization of the mind" as a key feature of colonialism in which the previous colonial ruler gives the newly "sovereign" subjects the illusion of self-determination and liberation, when in fact the imperialist and colonial structures are still in place, unconsciously demanding subservience (Wa Thiong'o, 1994). In The Wretched of the Earth,

Fanon refers to this as “peaceful violence” in which there is an absence of explicit colonial violence and oppression, but there is a pervasive oppressive atmosphere still present consisting in the modes of domination, structured poverty and discrimination, etc... (Fanon, 1963).

Latin American states after years of suffering under colonialism eventually gained independence from their previous colonial masters in the 19th century (Mabry, 2002). However, this accorded few benefits to the indigenous population, who still suffered under existing oppressive structures and under the long reach of imperialism (a system in which dominant nation-states compete for control of territory and resources in order to enhance their own natural power). Indigenous peoples suffered through a type of internal colonialism seen for example by the oppression and hacienda-style servitude continued by the rulers of these newly independent nation states (Bartra & Otero, 2005). Paulo Freire, in his seminal work Pedagogy of the Oppressed, notes that usually after a certain amount of time the oppressed accepts the dehumanizing “thing” status that the oppressors have forced onto their body and psyche and that usually, in the initial stage of struggle against their oppressors, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or “sub-oppressors” (Freire, P. 1970). This idea is akin to Fanon’s view that initially oppressed peoples accept the judgments of their oppressors. These power structures, with indigenous peoples at the absolute bottom of the hierarchy, continued until the 20th century when most Latin American states developed a corporatist state model.

### ***Corporatist relationship between the State & Indigenous peoples.***

Yashar (2005), Jung (2003), Harvey (2005), Bartra & Otero (2005), and Chong (2010) in their research studies explain and define the corporatist relationship (where the society and economy of a country is organized into major interest groups) that the Mexican and Ecuadorian

state had with its citizens, specifically focusing on the relationship with the state and their indigenous populations. Jung (2003) and Yashar (2005) note that in the Ecuadorian Amazon, indigenous peoples and nations were left largely to themselves until the 1970s, creating a sort of indigenous autonomy of neglect. Similarly, Harvey (2005) and Bartra & Otero (2005) published similar findings in regards to the relationship between the Mexican state and the indigenous populations in the Chiapas region of Mexico. However, the Ecuadorian and Mexican state, while following the same track, do have differences in the engagement and policies aimed at their indigenous populations in this period, and this will be explored thoroughly in the following sections.

*Colonization and Exploitation of the Ecuadorian Amazon.*

Yashar (2005), Perrault (2001), and Valdivia (2005) note that the modern history of the indigenous people in the Ecuadorian Amazon is very different from their Sierra indigenous counterparts (indigenous populations who lived in the highlands of Ecuador). While the indigenous peoples of the Sierra were constantly exposed to the colonial and mestizo<sup>6</sup> elite through serfdom and other social constructs, the indigenous people in the Ecuadorian Amazon were relatively left alone and secluded. The majority of Ecuadorian Amazon's contact with the "modern world" came through limited extractive enterprises in the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries (rubber, gold, spices) and through missionaries who ventured into the Amazon to convert or develop the indigenous people living there. (Perrault, 2001). This all changed in the 1960s and 1970s with the emergence of two fronts, colonization and oil exploration. Ecuador implemented two agrarian reform laws, one in 1964 and one in 1973, that opened the Ecuadorian Amazon to mestizo colonists (Sawyer, 2004; Perrault, 2001). The 1964 agrarian law abolished serfdom but encouraged the colonization of the open and title-less territory of the Ecuador Amazon. Between

1964 and 1985, 2.5 million hectares of Amazonian land were distributed to 55,000 families, displacing hundreds of thousands of indigenous people living there (Yashar, 2005). Valdivia (2005) and Jackson & Warren (2005) found that faced with massive displacement by colonists and with the possibility of indigenous peoples obtaining legal titles to their land through the reform acts some indigenous communities in the Amazon redefined themselves as peasant collectives.

At around the same time, oil exploration in the Amazon expanded with the discovery of petroleum in the Eastern Napo region by Texaco (now Chevron) in 1967. The creation of a 313-mile Trans-Andean pipeline to the Ecuadorian coast in 1972 brought oil into production and Ecuador's military government joined the oil cartel OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries] in 1973 (Sawyer, 2004). In order to mobilize against these two fronts for their rights to territory and culture and self-determination, three major regional indigenous groups in the Ecuador Amazon started to form: Federación de Centros Shuar, Federación de Organizaciones Indígenas del Napo (FOIN), and Organización de Pueblos Indígenas de Pastaza (OPIP) (Yashar, 2005). Oil rapidly became the most important export of the Ecuadorian state, and by the 1990s accounted for 50% of the state budget, a situation that continues today (Sawyer, 2004; Perrault, 2001). This oil dependency created a debt crisis in the 1980s which allowed the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to push for neoliberal reforms that the Ecuadorian government implemented in the 1980s and 1990s (Zamosc, 1994).

*Relationship between the Mexican state and Chiapas.*

The Mexican Revolution, fought from 1910- 1920, and led by the revolutionary figures of Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa, took back land from the hacienda landlords and gave back some land (called *ejidos*) and property rights to campesinos (rural peasants) for the first time in

Mexican history (McCarty, 2007; Bartra & Otero, 2005). This revolution initially gained rights for the peasant farmers, but due to quick assassinations of most of the leaders of the revolution, its most lasting legacy was the formation of the party Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Although the PRI was a party that was supposed to carry on the ideals of the revolution, it has become known for its authoritative means, human rights abuses, and corruption. The PRI ruled from 1929 as a virtual dictatorship until the year 2000 when President Fox from the center-right party Partido Accion Nacional (PAN) won the general election (Morton, 2002).

The research on the Zapatistas done by Morton (2002) and Reyes & Kaufmann (2011) indicate that the relationship between the Mexican state and the indigenous population in Chiapas, Mexico was similar to the relationship the Ecuadorian state had with the indigenous peoples in the Amazon. At the time of the Zapatista uprising in 1994, general illiteracy rates in Chiapas were around 42%, child malnutrition rates were 70%, and some regions of Chiapas only had a doctor to patient ratio of 1 to 25,000 (Reyes & Kaufman, 2011). Similarly, the research of Jung (2003) discovered that by the late 1980s, [one-third] of Chiapas' total population lived on ejido land, communal land guaranteed by Article 27 of the Mexican constitution. Although most of this ejido land was relatively infertile and ill-suited for agriculture, the land rights guaranteed by the ejido law weren't challenged until President Salinas managed to change the Constitution in 1992 so that ejido lands could be privatized and thus available to be sold on the private market (Bartra & Otero, 2005; Reyes & Kaufman, 2011)

#### *Idea of Mestizaje and Assimilation*

At the same time that the Mexican and Ecuadorian state were leaving their indigenous populations in a "de-facto autonomy of neglect," they were also attacking the culture and ethnicity of the indigenous peoples with the state policy of mestizaje and assimilation (La

Cadena, 2001; Radcliffe, 2011; Jackson & Warren, 2005). La Cadena (2001) found in her research study on race and mestizaje (the process of mixing the European and indigenous races, the downplay of cultural difference, and encouragement of assimilation into a homogenous mestizo nationalism) in Latin America that most Latin American countries, with the exception of Peru, developed a policy of mestizaje, cultural mixing, and assimilation in the period of 1940-1970. Peru curiously was the one Latin American country with a large indigenous population that had a limited indigenous movement at the turn of the 21st century (Yashar, 2005). This new mestizo (a person of Spanish and indigenous descent) nationalism changed from the elitist post-colonial view that looked down at mestizos, seeing them as “impure” or the unintended consequence of rape or female sexual deviance (La Cadena, 2001).

La Cadena (2001) and Radcliffe (2011) found that these Latin American states implemented this policy of mestizaje assimilation by creating policies that promoted Spanish literacy and explicitly or implicitly fostered the elimination of indigenous language and cultures. In response to this state directed attack on indigenous culture and history and the new ability to claim titles to their lands through new agrarian reform laws in the 1960s and 1970s, some indigenous peoples decided to self-identify as campesinos (Jackson & Warren, 2005; Valdivia, 2005). These working class indigenous peoples who embraced the idea of mestizaje saw it as a way of leaving the stigma and inferiority that historically came with being an “Indian” in Latin America. They saw it as an empowering tool that gave them the ability to take hold of the means of production and therefore their lives (La Cadena, 2001; Valdivia, 2005). It was not until the neoliberal policies implemented in the 1980s and 1990s by succeeding Mexican and Ecuadorian governments that a host of indigenous communities underwent a process of “re-indigenization”

of their indigenous identity that became a central theme in these indigenous movements (Zamosc, 1994; Jackson & Warren, 2005; Yashar, 2005; Stahler-Stolk, 2007; Fenelon, 2008; Becker, 2008).

### ***Globalization's effect on economic conditions***

The research done on the economic effects of globalization is paramount to this study as indigenous peoples, being one of the most marginalized in the world (World Bank, 2002; United Nations, 2009), are also the most susceptible to changes in the international and domestic economies. The economic effects of globalization (using the definition stated in Chapter 1), even after more than 20 years of implementation, are still highly contested however. The majority of the research on globalization from numerous economists, scholars, and policy makers indicate that the overall effects of economic globalization are overwhelmingly negative (Loker, 1999; Kentor, 2001; Stiglitz, 2002; Birdsall, 2006; Harvey, 2007; Sassen, 2015 ). On the other hand, some economists and scholars report positive economic effects of globalization in their research (Fukuyama, 2006; Sachs, 2006) with others reporting positive and negative effects (Rodrik, 1997).

Economic globalization and neoliberal policies came out of the Washington Consensus, an agreement of the financial giants of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and of western governments such as the United States and those in Western Europe. This Washington Consensus stated that the best way to spur economic growth and trade was to implement neoliberal policies, as defined above, and to force governments from the Global South (Latin America, Africa, etc.) to implement these neoliberal reforms in exchange for forgiveness of foreign debt or an agreement of a new loan (Hardt & Negri, 2001; Harvey, 2007). These loans, with their strict conditions, came to be called

Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP), as a way to introduce the international market to these countries, reduce trade barriers, and encourage foreign investment (IMF, 2000; WB, 2002).

The proponents of globalization stress that these new policies, although a tough pill to swallow at first, would increase economic growth and therefore help to alleviate poverty as well (IMF, 2000; WB, 2002). However, after 20+ years of these policies, research shows that the expected results of economic growth have been wholly inadequate, or at best inconsistent (Harvey, 2007; Rodrik, 2008; United Nations Conference on Trade & Development [UNCTAD], 2012; Sassen, 2015). D. Harvey, in his study on neoliberalism reports that the average global economic growth rates of the 1960s and 1970s (3.5 % and 2.4%) fell to 1.4% and 1.1% in the 1980s and 1990s (the decades of neoliberal implementation). The neoliberal reforms forced on Latin American, African, and Eastern European states created spurts of growth or stagnation, followed by economic collapse (Loker, 1999; Stiglitz, 2002; Solimono & Soto, 2005). On the other hand, proponents of globalization like to point to the economic growth in East and Southeast Asia and the decline of the worldwide population in extreme poverty (measured as living on \$1/day; WB, 2002; Sachs, 2006). Conversely, D. Harvey (2007) and Stiglitz (2002) argue that the decline in the worldwide population in extreme poverty was almost singlehandedly due to improvements in China and India and that the economic growth seen in these East Asia and South East Asia countries was the result of very un-neoliberal policies undertaken by these countries. For example such policies as mass public and private investment of infrastructure and education, and gradual easing of their trade barriers.

While there is not a complete consensus on globalization's effect on economic growth, an overwhelming majority of economists, scholars, and policymakers doing research on the subject found that these globalization policies have caused a rapid rise in inequality. This rise in

inequality has been shown as a rise in inequality domestically and a rise in global inequality in comparison of the industrialized countries to the Global South (UNDP, 1999; Kentor, 2001; Prasad et al., 2005; Birdsall, 2006; Harvey, 2007; Rodrik, 2008; UNCTAD, 2012). The UNCTAD report (2012) found that from the 1980s to the early 2000s income inequality rose in the US, UK, Japan, Ireland, Eastern European nations, as well as in burgeoning economies such as India, China, and SE Asia. Birdsall (2006), in her highly regarded report for the United Nations on globalization, found that in areas of the world where inequality was already high (Latin America and Africa), Structural Adjustment Policies [SAP] programs kept inequality high or worsened the situation. Moreover, Birdsall also discovered that the average income of richest countries to poorest had risen from 9 to 1 in 1900 to 100 to 1 in 2006 (Birdsall, 2006). Kentor (2001) and Rodrik (2008) note that in this new global capitalist economy, the rules and policies tend to benefit most the countries and individuals who already have economic power. In a field study on socioeconomic development and indigenous peoples, Radcliffe (2011) found that being indigenous highly increases the probability of being poor due to various factors such as colonialism, market reconstruction, and racial hierarchies. This allows one to conclude that global and domestic inequalities and economic volatility will disproportionately affect indigenous populations, making this information very important and relevant to this current research study.

### ***Globalization's effect on indigenous culture, land and territory***

This portion of the literature review will now examine the literature that has primarily looked at how globalization has affected indigenous populations and in particular how globalization has affected indigenous populations in Mexico and Ecuador. In the 1980s, in response to the fall in oil prices and the debt crisis, Ecuador decided to listen to international financial giants such as

the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) and implemented neoliberal structural adjustment programs (SAP) in the Ecuadorian economy (Sawyer, 2004; Yashar, 2005). Similarly, President Salinas of Mexico implemented neoliberal policies starting in 1988, which privatized previous communal *ejido* land. This opened the door to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which consolidated these new privatization and free-trade policies into one multi-national binding agreement (the countries in the trade agreement are Mexico, the United States, and Canada) (Morton, 2002; McCarty, 2008; Otero, 2011)

NAFTA and the other neoliberal reforms implemented by the Mexican and Ecuadorian governments opened up indigenous land to the international market and almost overnight priced rural campesino and indigenous farmers out of a job in Mexico. In Ecuador, big agri-businesses and transnational corporations (TNCs) invaded these newly privatized lands to a similar effect (Radcliffe, 2012; Otero, 2011). Suzanne Sawyer, in her long ethnographic study of indigenous peoples' engagement and resistance to extractive industries in the Ecuadorian Amazon states, "Neoliberalism relied on exclusionary culture principles that did more than divide Ecuadorian elites from the poor, the disenfranchised, and dangerous waste populations. It determined whose claims to property rights, citizenship, and public relief were worthy of recognition and whose were not. These racialized distinctions went beyond marking difference; they rationalized the hierarchies of privilege & profit (Sawyer, 2004, p 107).

A big part of the indigenous resistance to neoliberal globalization is its privatization, commodification, and displacement of indigenous peoples from their land. For numerous indigenous nationalities and cultures the cultural production and reproduction on their historical land is a vital element of their indigenous identity (Jung, 2003; Yashar, 2005; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; O'Faircheallaigh, 2013). Bolaños (2011) argues that the connection of

indigenous peoples to their historical land and territory is an essential part of the survival of their culture and ethnicity stating, “Territory encompasses symbolic and material meanings expressed through culture, religion, spiritual sites, memories, forest resources, water, etc... considered necessary for indigenous peoples cultural and economic survival” (Bolaños, p 56).

Indigenous scholar Taiaiake Alfred notes that while western state and non-state actors are no longer trying to eradicate indigenous bodies such as was the case during the time of colonialism, these western actors are instead “colonizing” indigenous peoples by trying to eradicate their history and culture. Alfred states, “Globalization in indigenous eyes reflects a deepening, hastening, and stretching of an already existing empire” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p 601). This ‘Empire’ that Alfred references, refers to the concept of Empire that political theorists Negri and Hardt defined in their influential book, *Empire* (2001). Negri & Hardt define Empire as a stateless global network of power relationships that perpetuate capitalism through the constant reorganization of social life and natural resources (Negri & Hardt, 2001). This new concept of a globalized Empire is of great concern to indigenous peoples as to them it represents an attack on their land, their culture, their autonomy, and their ethnicity (Jung, 2003; Reyes & Kaufman, 2011).

However, there are some scholars and policymakers who see that globalization has a positive effect on indigenous populations (Hale, 2004; Weyland, 2004). Weyland (2004) indicates that neoliberal policies have strengthened the sustainability of democracy in Latin America but has limited its quality, indicating that now that the international market has entered these countries, they (western governments or financial institutions) can uphold democracy by applying embargos or sanctions until democracy has been restored (Weyland, 2004). However, Weyland’s research and claims seem to be inconsistent and at odds with US and western

involvement (state and non-state) in Latin America, with the tendency of western involvement to favor undemocratic repressive far-right militaristic regimes or dictatorships in order to make sure that their interests are being met (Nieto & Brandt, 2003; Brands, 2010; Mitchell, 2012).

However, Hale (2004) in his study on globalization and indigenous politics develops a more solid argument for globalization, arguing that globalization policies have been better and more liberating for indigenous people when compared to the previous policies of mestizaje and assimilation. Peru's anti-mestizaje policy of "beyond racism," which declared that there is no such thing as race, only cultural difference, seems to have come to the same conclusion as Hale. The founder of the Institute of Peruvian studies, Jose Matos Mar, confirms this, stating in 1965 that the policy of mestizaje was "an imposition from the colonial past, an idea replete with racial prejudices, aimed at the extinction of indigenous cultures" (La Cadena, 2001, p 19.). However, Hale (2004) admits that in order for indigenous peoples to take advantage of globalization, they must "govern themselves in accordance with the logic of global capitalism" (p 7). This idea doesn't give the reader an indication of how it will benefit indigenous peoples and is inconsistent with the fact that Peru's globalization policy of "beyond racism" produced a very limited indigenous movement in contrast to other strong indigenous movements in other Latin American countries which have similar high percentages of indigenous peoples, for example in Ecuador, Mexico, Bolivia, and Guatemala (La Cadena, 2001; Hale, 2004; Yashar, 2005).

Globalization's reach into indigenous land, their territory and its natural resources has been profound as well (Sawyer, 2004; Valdivia, 2007; O'Faircheallaigh, 2013). Sawyer (2004) reports and documents numerous abuses against indigenous populations perpetuated by the state and by the extractive industries in their attempts of oil and mineral extraction, causing displacement of indigenous communities, environmental contamination, violence and repression of indigenous

activists and leaders, and development of dependence between indigenous communities and extractive industries. O’Faircheallaigh (2013) found in his research study on the impact of extractive industries on indigenous peoples that extractive industries have highly marginalized indigenous peoples because they (indigenous peoples) rely heavily on land and resources that are susceptible to environmental damage from resource extraction, are vulnerable to impact of immigrant populations, and lack political influence combined with discrimination and social disadvantage. Moreover, O’Faircheallaigh’s research study found that these extractive industries were facilitated by state agencies in industrialized and developing countries, which often ignored indigenous interests and have been complicit in repressing indigenous opposition (O’Faircheallaigh, 2013).

As indicated by the literature review above, indigenous peoples have been under attack by western empires, nations, and cultures since the start of colonialism in the 16th century. Shortly after previous colonies achieved their own sovereignty and independence from their colonial masters in the 19th century, the process of imperialism began and the policies of assimilation and mestizaje were implemented in numerous Latin American countries. Finally, in the late 20th century, the subjugation and oppression of indigenous and other marginalized populations has evolved into a form of global capitalism or Empire (Hardt & Negri, 2001). While all this literature provides a much needed window into the history of marginalization of indigenous peoples and the impact globalization has had in its short history, current literature severely lacks an indigenous perspective. For this reason, this current research study is needed in order to build on previous research but also to fill in the gaps that occur when only a Eurocentric perspective is present. The next section in this literature review will look at previous research that has investigated and analyzed the methods of resistance, decolonization, cultural survival and

everyday living that have been employed by the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico and by the indigenous movement in Ecuador.

### **Decolonization & Models of Resistance**

Although indigenous peoples have been oppressed and marginalized since the history of Western intervention, it was not until the implementation of neoliberal policies that the majority of the indigenous movements in Latin America truly coalesced and brought their demands to the national and international stage (Jackson & Warren, 2005; Yashar, 2005). Indigenous scholar, Taiaiake Alfred states that it is this historical struggle and resistance against this marginalization which helps define their indigenous identity: “Indigenusness is an identity constructed, shaped & lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism...it is this oppositional, place based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples that fundamentally distinguishes indigenous peoples from other people of the world” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p 597). Alfred and other scholars see this new indigenous resurgence as a process of indigenous peoples coming together in the acts of decolonization and self-determination (Jung, 2003; Keal, 2007; Corntassel, 2012; Grosfoguel, 2012). The focus of this research study is on the Zapatista movement and on the indigenous movement in Ecuador, both of which will be examined in the next sections.

#### ***The Zapatista model***

The Zapatista project and movement have undergone rapid transformation and evolution since they rose up in 1994 and are continually evolving. Initially framed in the likeness of other leftist insurgencies in Latin America in the 1970s, in their evolution the Zapatistas have switched the focus of their struggle to an indigenous struggle, and have been creating their own autonomous

spaces where their concepts of democracy, justice, freedom, and peace can be put into practice (Morton, 2002; Ramirez et al., 2008).

The most current form of a Zapatista manifesto is seen in the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle, released July, 2005 (Harvey, 2005). This document was a reorganization of their goals, their values, their methods and their model of resistance, in word and in action. Shortly afterward in 2005 the Zapatistas reorganized their 38 autonomous municipalities in Chiapas called *aguascalientes* into 6 autonomous zones called *caracoles*, each with their own autonomous government, workers collectives, and education, health, and agriculture infrastructure (McGreal, 2006; Ramirez et al., 2008). This new process of decolonization and resistance did not aim to take state-power, with the Zapatistas determining that in this new supra-state system of globalization the only way to struggle against it and ensure that their rights are met is to step outside, or transcend it (Harvey, 2005). Subcomandante Marcos, the long-time spokesman for the Zapatistas, explains the idea of not taking state power in this way, “We cannot replicate the same logic as the government...Revolution is not about the taking of power or the imposition of a new social system, but about something which precedes all of this. It is about the construction of the antechamber of the new world, a space where each of the different political forces with equal responsibilities and rights can struggle. It is about creating a world in which many worlds fit...We are ‘other’ and we are different...We are fighting in order to continue being ‘other’ and different” (as cited in Evans, 2009, p 92, 93).

Otero (2004), in his research study on indigenous struggles against globalization, is in agreement with this Zapatista model as a way of resistance without taking state power, stating that struggles aimed at taking over the state have been the least effective in achieving justice and democracy while struggles like the Zapatistas that aim on strengthening civil society instead,

have had the most impact and are the most effective strategy in anti-globalization struggles. The Zapatistas reinforce this idea with their slogans of '*abajo y a la izquierda*' (from below and to the left), '*mandar obedeciendo*' (lead by obeying), and *caminar preguntando* (walk while asking questions) (Stahler-Stolk, 2007). Grosfoguel, criticizing the Eurocentric, male, white dominant model of universalist rights based doctrines as form of decolonization argues that the Zapatistas method of "rearguardism", that is leading from behind (in contrast to vanguardism), is a form of postmodern decolonization (Grosfoguel, 2012).

A key component of the resistance and decolonization model of the Zapatistas is the evolution of a dialogical Gramscian relationship between the EZLN and the indigenous communities in Chiapas (Morton, 2002; Otero, 2004). This dialogical relationship between teacher and student, also influenced by the ideas of educator Paulo Freire, is based on the idea that the students already possess considerable knowledge and the role of the teacher is only to help extract that information. The teacher learns from the students and the students gain awareness and empowerment. This dialogical model that has become the formation of the "rearguardism" policy is one of the core tenets of Zapatismo which is in complete contrast with the initial ideas of the six urban Marxists from Mexico City, who came down to Chiapas with the idea of leading the indigenous peoples into a revolution that will overthrow the State (Morton, 2002). Soon, these EZLN founders realized that they had much to learn from the indigenous organizations and communities that were already in place when they arrived in 1984 and much has changed and evolved in Zaptismo through these processes (Jung, 2003; McGreal, 2006; Ramirez et al., 2008).

There are some criticisms of the Zapatista resistance model as an anti-globalization struggle, as an indigenous struggle, as a decolonization project, and as a leftist movement. Hale in his

research study argues that the Zapatista movement in its reluctance to engage with the State and other neoliberal institutions has created a highly fragmented, isolated, and diminished indigenous movement (Hale, 2004). Well known leftist scholars and political theorists Atilio Boron and Tariq Ali criticize the Zapatistas' unwillingness to take state power, arguing that they have failed to make any serious gains and that they (the Zapatistas) serve as more of a moral slogan than any serious threat to the Mexican state and allied globalized powers (Harvey, 2005).

However, for the thousands of indigenous peoples living in the autonomous Zapatista zones, they have seen significant gains in their health, nutrition, livelihood, environment, women's rights, and indigenous pride and culture. Before the arrival of the Zapatistas, Chiapas was a de-facto colony for the Mexican state, producing a large percentage of its natural resources while most of the population was suffering from illiteracy, malnutrition, high infant mortality rates, and with limited access to general social services and infrastructure (Morton, 2002; Stahler-Stolk, 2007). Reyes & Kaufman in their research study on the Zapatistas found that by 2007 the Zapatista autonomous zones each had their own horizontal style government, autonomous primary and secondary schools (with autonomous high schools as well in several zones). Two hundred community health clinics were constructed with 25 regional clinics and several municipal hospitals, and with a variety of self-sufficient production, exchange and social service projects and collective gardening projects having been constructed as well (Stahler-Stolk, 2007; Reyes & Kaufman, 2011).

Another key aspect of the Zapatista resistance model is their demand for autonomy. However, the indigenous movements' demand for autonomy must not be confused with the Eurocentric model of sovereignty. Keal (2007), in his study on indigenous self-determination and sovereign states, indicates that when previous colonial states won their independence in the 19th century,

the historical borders of indigenous peoples were not taken into consideration. He found that some indigenous scholars and activists saw the Eurocentric notions of sovereignty as another tool of oppression, used in order to assimilate and relegate indigenous peoples. Reyes & Kaufman (2011) in their study on the Zapatistas and decolonization, agree with Keal, arguing that currently sovereignty is seen as the requirements for the establishment of “national independence” within the framework of an independent nation state away from previous colonial rulers. Reyes and Kaufmann (2011) argue that this (sovereignty) is only a new form of subordination of non-western people and domination associated with neoliberal global capitalism. That is, it is a Eurocentric model where non-western subjects were ‘excluded’ from sovereignty and given only a trajectory to assimilate and to leave behind their historical existence (Reyes & Kaufmann, 2011).

Therefore, in the words of indigenous scholars and western scholars researching indigenous demands, the indigenous idea of autonomy is different from the Eurocentric idea of sovereignty (Keal, 2007; Reyes & Kaufman, 2011; Cornassel, 2012). However, this concept is easily misunderstood, which is part of the reason that the idea of indigenous autonomy or self-determination frightens the nation-state in which they reside.

Keal (2007) defines the idea of indigenous autonomy (or self-determination) in this way: “Self-determination is paramount among the rights sought by indigenous peoples but most of them do not interpret this either as a right to statehood or sovereignty. They see it instead as meaning the ability to control their own cultural and economic destinies within existing state structures” (Keal, 2007, p 288). However, the current nation-state is still seen by many indigenous peoples as a colonial structure, unwilling to cede autonomy or collective rights to indigenous peoples or its citizens (Radcliffe, 2012). The indigenous demand for autonomy is

present in both the Zapatista struggle and the indigenous movement in Ecuador (Jackson & Warren, 2005; Yashar, 2005) but are framed in different ways, not only in their discourse but also with their engagement with state and non-state actors concerning this concept. This research study will elucidate these discourses and demands. The next section will focus on the literature that has documented the ways that the indigenous movement in Ecuador frames their demands for autonomy and their resistance model.

### *Indigenous model in Ecuador*

The indigenous movement in Ecuador, though being active since the 1960s (Zamosc, 1994), was politicized and exploded onto the national and international scene during their struggle against the neoliberal governments of Ecuador in the 1990s and early 2000s (Becker, 2011; Jackson & Warren, 2005; Yashar, 2005). The indigenous movement, aligned with social movements at that time, brought the country to a standstill, helped overthrow 2 governments (Bucaram in 1997 and Mahaud in 2000) and in doing so thrust their demands onto the international stage (Jackson & Warren, 2005; Radcliffe, 2011). Jackson & Warren (2005) argue that the indigenous mobilizations in Ecuador against neoliberal governments were strengthened and united by the sense that they were organizing against a common enemy, something that has proved complicated during the tenure of the “post-neoliberal” Correa administration (Becker, 2011). Though occurring at around the same time as other anti-globalization indigenous movements, the indigenous movement in Ecuador has various demands, discourses and engagement with state and non-state actors that are uniquely their own. These aspects have been heavily researched in the current literature and their findings will be discussed below.

A major characteristic of the indigenous movement in Ecuador that separates itself from the other indigenous movements occurring at the same time is its breadth and politicization. While

the Zapatistas have been at times largely separate from other indigenous movements in Mexico (Bartra & Otero, 2005), the indigenous movement in Ecuador, since the formation of the national indigenous organization Conaie in 1986, has tried to unify the indigenous peoples, present their platform, and engage with the Ecuadorian state, all on a national scale (Yashar, 2005; Chong, 2010). The politicization of the indigenous movement in Ecuador coalesced in the creation of the indigenous political party, Pachakutik in 1996, which has fielded and won legislative seats in every election since then (Mustillo & Madrid, 2012). However, tensions and disagreements have risen between Conaie and Pachakutik since the failed coalition with President Gutierrez's government in 2002, with Conaie leaving the Gutierrez-Pachakutik coalition in 2003 and Pachakutik soon following suit. Though eventually reunifying over joint opposition to a free trade agreement, Conaie and Pachakutik have distanced themselves from each other, something that President Correa has taken advantage of in order to fragment the indigenous movement that has been a vocal opponent of his expansion of extractive activity in the Ecuadorian Amazon (Becker, 2011; Moreno, 2014). The decline of Pachakutik has been steady, receiving their worst showing in the 2006 and 2009 elections (Madrid, 2012) with only 30 percent of indigenous voters choosing Pachakutik candidates (Mijeski & Beck, 2011).

The decline of Pachakutik can be seen due to the difficulty of putting together a national political indigenous party due to all the heterogeneity among indigenous peoples in Ecuador but also in the divide in discourse among indigenous organizations at the national and local level (Perrault, 2001; Radcliffe, 2011; Martinez Novo, 2016). In the field study about indigenous identities in the Ecuadorian Amazon, Perrault (2001) found that the discourse from local indigenous community members was vastly different from the discourse of the regional and national indigenous organizations. While the local discourse focuses on material survival for

their family and community and in identifying their indigenous identity with daily practices, language, methods of production and consumption, the discourses from the regional and national indigenous organizations were more politicized, focusing on more abstract constructs such as plurinationality and ethnic identity (Perrault, 2001). Mijeski and Beck (2011) also note that the political opportunism of national indigenous leaders and their failure to listen to their local bases as reasons for the separation between local and national leadership and why local leadership and communities were disinvested in promoting and/or voting for Pachakutik candidates. This heterogeneity amongst the indigenous peoples is portrayed in the speech that indigenous activist and leader Nina Pacari gave to President Ballén about the new agrarian reform law, witnessed by Suzanne Sawyer (2004) in her ethnographic study in the Ecuadorian Amazon:

“It (the national agrarian law) must take into account cultural differences; the pueblos indigenas, the nacionalidades indigenas, cannot be treated the same as the non-indigenous campesinos or non-indigenous empresarios. It must take into account geographic differences: The Amazon and the Coast cannot be treated the same as the Sierra. It must take into account economic differences...Any law that we can imagine for this country needs to capture this diversity.”

(as cited in Sawyer, 2004, pg 186).

A key demand and concept that has emerged from the indigenous movement in Ecuador is the idea of plurinationality and autonomy (Jameson, 2011; Becker, 2011; Radcliffe, 2012). This basic premise of plurinationality asks for the recognition that Ecuador is a multicultural nation, with multiple cultures and multiple nationalities that reside in and are a part of the nation state (Yashar, 2007; Radcliffe, 2012). Plurinationality, in addition to its resistance to cultural homogenization, also demands local autonomy and rights to their land and its natural resources.

Numerous scholars have found that indigenous peoples and nationalities see the right to their historical land as essential to their ethnic and cultural survival (Perrault, 2001; Bolanos, 2011; Radcliffe, 2012) have reported this linkage of territory and indigenous identity. This push for plurinationality and autonomy by the indigenous movement in Ecuador has achieved minor success: the recognition of the pluricultural characteristics of Ecuador included in the 1998 constitution and with the 2008 constitution recognizing Quichua and Shuar as official languages and recognizing Ecuador as a plurinational state (Valdivia, 2005; Jameson, 2011). However, these successes have been rarely implemented in practice, and the idea of plurinationality is a complicated and revolutionary concept, one I think that has not been adequately explained or addressed in current literature and in particular is lacking an indigenous perspective. This research study hopes to fill those gaps, with numerous indigenous community members and leaders giving their thoughts and explanation on the concept of plurinationality.

As the previous paragraphs have indicated, the linkage between indigenous identity and culture with their land is a key factor in indigenous demands, movements, and mobilizations (Yashar, 2005; Becker, 2011; Bolanos, 2011; Cornassel, 2012; Madrid, 2012). The indigenous struggle for their land in Ecuador has been at the forefront of the indigenous movement as neoliberal governments opened up the Amazon to extractive multinational industries and by the continuation of extractive activity by current President Correa (Sawyer, 2004; Becker, 2011; Egas Villacrés, 2014). In addition to the findings of O’Faircheallaigh’s report on the relationship between extractive industries and indigenous populations indicated previously in this literature review, his report also found that this relationship is essentially exploitative, with empirical research showing that the regions with extractive industry activity suffer from persistent poverty and diminished existing economic activity (O’Faircheallaigh, 2011). Similarly, Sawyer (2004)

reports in her ethnographic study that the tactics of extractive transnational industries in Ecuador have been to break community unity, corrupt local leaders, foment dependency and paternalism (by providing monetary works), promise development, negotiate unilaterally with hand-selected community leaders, and frequently resort to violence, intimidation, and oppression to get their way (Sawyer, 2004).

### **Summary**

As shown in the literature above, the marginalization of indigenous peoples has continued throughout history, whether it is through colonialism, imperialism, assimilation, or through globalization processes. Globalization, though a relatively new phenomenon (around 30+ years or so), has had an extensive amount of research done on its economic, social, and political effects. While there is a not complete consensus on globalization's impact on indigenous peoples, the overwhelming majority of research points to certain conclusions that indicate that its impact is overall negative. Likewise, there has been a significant amount of research by scholars on certain anti-globalization indigenous movements such as the Zapatista movement and the indigenous movement in Ecuador. The current literature has analyzed and presented these particular movements' demands, methods of resistance, their methods of decolonization, and their framing of their indigenous identity. However, while all of these findings have contributed greatly to the understanding of the impact globalization and western intervention has had on indigenous peoples and has given us a better idea and understanding of the Zapatista movement and the indigenous movement in Ecuador, there is an overwhelming lack of indigenous perspectives and voices or there is a tendency to explain and simplify indigenous concepts in a Eurocentric way and without endorsement from indigenous people themselves. Therefore, this

research study hopes to amplify indigenous voices, their concepts and their demands, and to elucidate their ways of resisting, surviving, and living in this globalized world.

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The marginalization of indigenous peoples and nations throughout history has been well documented. More recently, numerous studies have researched the effects of globalization on indigenous peoples and the resulting indigenous movements and resistance in response. However, research on these subjects from an indigenous perspective has been severely lacking. This study seeks to use the researcher's ability to work, live, and communicate within indigenous communities in order to elucidate from an indigenous perspective the impact of globalization on indigenous communities and their ways of life, struggle, and demands in response. I spent two weeks living, working, studying, and conversing with the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico and I spent four months doing field research in Ecuador. Eight participants (5 self-identifying as indigenous) agreed to participate in interviews concerning this study. The participant observation was recorded as field notes and coded and participants' interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded. Categories were created to illuminate themes or patterns in the data. Data analysis and the discussion will be used to provide the reader with an indigenous perspective of how globalization and western intervention has affected indigenous peoples and their ways of resisting, responding, and living in this current globalized world.

### **Design**

This research is an inductive study that will develop conclusions and information about the impact on the globalization and western intervention on indigenous populations and the demands, themes, and resistance of particular indigenous movements in Ecuador and Mexico. The methods used were archival data review, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews.

*Operationalization*

A significant amount of time was initially spent on collecting and researching archival data. Database searches were used in the databases of google scholar, web of science, and EBSCO. These databases were used in order to ensure that the articles used were exemplary studies that had gone through a rigorous peer review process. Finally, briefs from reputable non-governmental, grassroots, or civil-society organizations were also included and analyzed in this study.

Field Research in Ecuador was done with the NGO, Centros de Derechos Económicos y Sociales (CDES) in Quito, Ecuador for 4 months and the networks of this NGO were used to observe, interact, converse and to investigate the themes of the indigenous movement in Ecuador regarding their struggle for the rights to their territory, autonomy, and identity. My semi-structured interviews are with members and leaders from indigenous communities and with members of grassroots organizations/NGOs/academia that have spent a substantial amount of time working with indigenous communities.

Field Research in Mexico was enabled by the Mexican Solidarity Network (MSN), which has close ties with the Zapatistas, allowing myself to live, work, and learn from the Zapatista community of Oventic for two weeks. Observing, working, learning from and conversing with Zapatista members and leaders, and listening to what they were willing to teach and show about their community, provided a substantial window into their beliefs, modes of resistance, and their daily life.

## **Population/Sampling**

### **Archival Data**

A substantial amount of research has already been published regarding the indigenous movements in Ecuador and the Zapatistas in Mexico. Therefore, the archival data were collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, official federal, state, or municipal data, and briefs from highly reputable non-profit, non-government, civil-society organizations, or communiqués published by the indigenous groups themselves. The archival data used for analysis was confined using only literature from indigenous scholars or literature from well-known academics that had previously done exemplary ethnographic research with indigenous population on research related to this study or from communiqués coming from the indigenous groups themselves.

### **Participant Observation and One-on-one Interviews**

In this study, I used purposive sampling, in order to obtain informants in a deliberative, predetermined, and non-random sample (Bernard, 2002). The method was used for finding individuals who self-identified as indigenous or had done significant amount of work or research with indigenous communities in Ecuador or the Zapatista communities in Mexico. One-on-one interviews with participants were obtained by finding gatekeepers that would allow me access to indigenous activists, leaders, members, and communities. Interviews were face-to-face with participants. A semi-structured approach was used as it allowed for open-ended answers that permitted participants' individual, unique responses and which could possibly lead to new themes that would not have shown up in a constrained structured interview approach. The interview questions were based on and reflected the research questions of the study.

## **Data Collection**

### **Archival Data**

Archival data were only collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, official federal, state, or municipal data, publications from the various indigenous groups, and briefs from highly reputable non-profit or non-government organizations, or self-published communiques from the researched indigenous groups. All of this data was limited to the years 1994-2016. This was due to 1994 being the year of the Zapatista uprising and comes after major mobilizations of the indigenous movement in Ecuador.

### **Participant Observation**

Field research was conducted between July 2015 and December 20, 2015. In regards to the field research in Ecuador, I attended numerous conferences, visited numerous indigenous communities, and had direct communication with indigenous leaders, members, and advocates. I recorded my observations and key points of the conversations I had with indigenous community members during conferences as field notes (Merriam 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). My attendance of various mobilizations and conferences organized by indigenous organizations helped me understand the social, economic, political, and cultural context of the indigenous movement in Ecuador and helped reveal the intricate relationships between the different actors (such as the State, NGOs, amongst indigenous groups, local vs. national, different regional discourses, etc...).

In regards to the field research with the Zapatista communities, I was invited (through the facilitation of the Mexican Solidarity Network) to live, work, and learn from the Zapatista community of Oventic in Chiapas, Mexico for a period of two weeks (July 6 to July 17, 2015). During my time there, I recorded their lessons, my observations, and key points of conversations

I had with Zapatista community members during my time there as field notes (Merriam 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

### **One-on-one Interviews**

Eight semi-structured interviews were done with indigenous community members, leaders, and researchers/advocates for this study. The interviews ranged from 30 to 70 minutes. Five of the interviews were with members of the indigenous community in Ecuador (3 Huaorani, 1 Quichua, and 1 Shuar) and three of the interviews were with researchers who had spent a significant amount of time living and working with indigenous communities in Ecuador. Seven of the interviewees are Ecuadorian.

### **Data Analysis**

Analysis and processing of the archival data happened retroactively while data was being collected. Conversations with advisors and key informants discussing the central themes that the archival data touches upon also happened in a retroactive timeframe.

All interviews were tape recorded with prior participant permission, and verbatim transcriptions were produced to conduct data analysis. The interviewees that were in Spanish, which were then translated into English. The general inductive approach methodology was used to analyze data from interviews and field notes. General inductive approach guidelines developed by Thomas (2006) allowed me to code, identify central themes, and develop a descriptive framework that emerged from the narratives that were discussed or observed.

During data collection and analysis procedures, extra care was taken by the researcher to follow the guidelines for researchers working with indigenous populations outlined by Smith (1999) in her book, *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Smith indicates that it is of the utmost importance for Western researchers, when researching

indigenous peoples, to place the experience of the indigenous peoples at the center of the research, and to be constantly aware of how their worldview might re(inscribe) the dominant discourse of the Other (in reference to the colonial relationship amongst western societies and indigenous peoples) (Smith, 1999). The intent of this research to give an indigenous perspective on the research questions hopefully has fulfilled the guidelines set up by Smith (1999) in ensuring that the indigenous peoples/experience are at the forefront of the research.

Through reviewing previously established literature, by analyzing the field notes taken during the time spent observing, working, living, and conversing with indigenous members who live in these communities, and by analyzing interviews done with indigenous community members and affiliates, I have generated an overview and descriptive analysis regarding the research questions posed in this research study.

### **Limitations, Ethical Considerations & Safeguards**

Working with any marginalized population requires that the researcher must be careful in order to make sure that his/her positionality does not influence the subject population. Extra efforts were made to ensure that all participant approval was voluntary and that participants were at least 18 years of age. Before interviews, an agreement form was signed or verbal consent was given, and participants were notified that they had the right to not answer any question and to end the interview at any time. Interview questions were fluid and evolving and the researcher ensured that they were all done in an objective and professional manner. Also, my presence as a white westerner either conversing with, interviewing, observing, or listening to members from these communities will inevitably influence the discourse, actions, and interactions I have with the community. Therefore, I actively made an effort during the research process to reflect on and be critical of my own culture, values, assumptions, positionality, and beliefs during the

researching process in order to not presuppose my assumptions and worldview over the indigenous participants during the data collection and analysis process.

### **Chapter 3 Summary**

Archival data, participant observation, and one-on-one interviews with indigenous peoples and academics were used to gather data for this qualitative study. The study's sample came from indigenous community members, activists, leaders, scholars, or allies of the Zapatistas or of the indigenous movement in Ecuador. Participants who were part of the research study were found through the gatekeepers of the Mexico Solidarity Network and the Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales. Data findings are discussed in Chapter 4.

### Chapter 4: Analysis

The methods used in the data collection process were participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The field research with the Zapatista communities was done over a two-week period where I listened, learned, lived and worked from the Zapatista community of Oventic in Chiapas. During my time there, I recorded their lessons, my observations, and key points of the conversations I had with Zapatista community members as field notes. Eight semi-structured interviews were done with indigenous community members, leaders, and researchers/advocates for this study. Five of the interviews were with members who self-identified with an indigenous community in Ecuador (3 Huaorani, 1 Quichua, and 1 Shuar) and three of the interviews were with researchers who had spent a significant amount of time living and working with indigenous communities in Ecuador. Three of the interviewees are male and five are female. Seven of the interviewees are Ecuadorian. The interviews were transcribed word for a word, and their direct quotes in this analysis will be noted by the personal communication tagline in this analysis chapter. Similarly, analysis taken from field notes will be indicated as such.

Both the field notes from the participant observation and the transcripts of the interviews were analyzed using the general inductive method. Through the coding techniques used in this method, two key themes, each with important subcategories, emerged from the data. The two themes and their subcategories were:

- I. The impact of western structures and globalization.
  - A. Structural racism/neo-colonialism
  - B. Environmental impact/displacement of indigenous peoples/exacerbation of poverty

- C. Governmental and paramilitary intimidation, division, and marginalization of indigenous communities
- II. Methods of Decolonization (demands and resistance)
  - A. Need for basic rights & services
  - B. Need for territory
  - C. Self-determination, autonomy, plurinationality
  - D. Decolonization of the mind/role of international actors

### **Impact of Western structures and Globalization**

Throughout the interviews and the participant observation field research, it was clear to me, either through their responses or actions, that western influence has affected and continues to affect indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Mexico. Whether it was through structural racism, marginalization, paramilitary intimidation, displacement from and destruction of their land, creations of division, or paternalism, western influence has for the most part been overwhelmingly negative. This section hopes to give the reader a better understanding of the effects of western influence on indigenous communities in Ecuador and Mexico from an indigenous perspective; in their own words, thoughts, and actions.

#### *Structural Racism/Neo-colonialism:*

Throughout the field research I did with indigenous organizations in Ecuador and Mexico, it was clear to me that there still is a high amount of structural and individual racism against indigenous peoples, and in particular against indigenous organizations that disagreed with or resisted government policies or extractive projects from transnational corporations. This

systematic racism shows itself in the availability, quality, and delivery of education, health services, infrastructure, and in the general societal view of indigenous peoples. In both Mexico and Ecuador, the general mainstream societal view on those who were indigenous was that they were stupid, poor, improper, and backwards. For the most part, the indigenous individuals that were seen as successful were painted in a racialized lens as having become more mestizo or Eurocentric; therefore, in order for those who are indigenous to move forward in society, they had to escape and leave their indigenusness behind (Michael Blosser, field notes, 2015). While the strength, visibility, and success of the Zapatista movement and the indigenous movement in Ecuador has altered this perception, and allowed the general public and those that are indigenous to take pride in their indigenusness, the general negative connotation that comes with being indigenous still prevails today.

In respect to the availability, access, quality, and delivery of basic services in both Ecuador and Mexico, the reality continues to be dismal for indigenous populations. In Ecuador, President Correa's 'post-neoliberal' administration has implemented bicultural education, but according to each indigenous participant, this is still done in most part by mestizo teachers from the city and done in a paternalistic way. Leo Cerda, a Quichua activist, provides his view on the systematic racism today compared to the racism at the end of the era of neoliberal governments in Ecuador: "You cannot compare racism from ten years ago to racism to today. There still is systematic racism and institutionalization of racism all throughout Latin America. But it definitely has changed. Before it was really tough to be indigenous because you were subject to systematic racism in the school systems, within society, even if you were rural indigenous or if you came from a small town indigenous" (personal communication, December 7, 2015).

The Zapatista community that I spent time in also referenced their experience with structural racism. The Zapatista teachers refused to call themselves *maestros/maestras* (Spanish word for teacher) but preferred to be called *promotores/promotoras* (Spanish word for supporter/facilitator) not only because they believed in the dialogical relationship between the teacher and the student, but also because they said that their experiences with the mestizo teachers that the government sent were horrible and they refuse to be associated with that concept of teaching (Michael Blosser, field notes, July 6th, 2015).

Every research participant in the study, whether indigenous or a scholar who has spent a significant time with indigenous communities, described the racist and demeaning way that both the Mexican and Ecuadorian government treated indigenous leaders and activists. For example, President Correa of Ecuador and members of his administration constantly refer to indigenous activists as “little people who do nothing” or in other paternalistic and demeaning ways. Kar, a Shuar scholar and activist in Ecuador, explains the systematic racism indigenous leaders experience from the government: “From what we can see the government seeks to ignore and delegitimize the struggle of the indigenous peoples, basically there is a discourse of exclusion where its leaders are accused and insulted, I think that's not the way that a statesman should find the unity or inclusion to enter a dialogue...The crisis is the state, one that is recognized as plurinational, but in practice continues to exclude indigenous peoples. The crisis is in the political class that still does not understand the need for the conservation of the difference of the peoples who inhabit Ecuador and who can build an equitable and inclusive country that allows new social actors that can be a constructive part of a new country” (personal communication, December 16, 2015).

A big difficulty in the indigenous struggle was the result of the colonial legacy and advent of neo-colonialist projects that forced indigenous organizations to organize in a Eurocentric framework and in structures that were foreign to them. Kar, from the Shuar nation, indicates the difficulty in navigating structures that were foreign to them, saying, “Traditionally we had our forms of social organization, but with the entry of colonization, evangelization and the state itself, we had to organize ourselves in a structure that wasn’t our own” (personal communication, December 16, 2015).

*Environmental Destruction, Displacement of Indigenous Peoples, Exacerbation of Poverty:*

Another category that arose from the research data was the environmental destruction, displacement of indigenous peoples from their land, and the exacerbation of poverty that resulted from western impact on indigenous lands. Some of the participants referenced how all of these effects were largely the result of the introduction of extractive industries, big agricultural firms, or state infrastructure/development projects as globalization opened up their lands to the global market. Some of the research participants are from the Huaorani nation in the Ecuadorian Amazon, who still have members of their nation who refuse contact with the western world. They reference how globalization’s impact on indigenous peoples is more than the exploitation and displacement of their lands from extractive industries.

A, a leader of the Huaorani women’s association, says:

“Requests by those unique people who do not want to make contact, because we, the world we, the Huaorani, have made contact with so far are suffering blows. They speak to us, they reduce our territories, pollute us, they have brought new diseases, so the WDC (Huaorani who reject direct contact with the western world) say that they want to live; that the Huaorani and Taromenane live in their territory

that is not contaminated; no more new roads...we went to this meeting to demand to the commission to do something for these people that are not respected; not to send more oil from the same state of Ecuador. Let there be no more roads, no more oil wells, this is unique territory, that this has altered the life of Huaorani and Taromenane who have hunted and lived freely here for generations. That life, as we as Huaorani know how to develop; we have had enough of the market in our forest; we need to eat, we don't need oil. The Oil industry has killed many and continues to kill and we want them to respect those territories we have" (personal communication, October 24, 2015).

The history of extractive industries (oil, mining, cattle farming) in the Ecuadorian Amazon has a long history, and it has been thoroughly documented in this paper's literature review that these industries, with the compliance of the state, have wrought environmental degradation, repression, and displacement of indigenous communities. Leo Cerda, a Quichua activist from the Amazon explains the impact that the extractive industries have had on the Amazon saying, "We've discovered oil since the 1960s and we have seen what that has done to the northern region of the Amazon. Not only because of the environmental destruction but a lot of the social impact to the indigenous nationalities that have to live within this structure of industrialization that surrounds the oil companies. The corruption of the state, the corruption of the companies, the violation of the human rights, the violation of the right of nature, the violation of the indigenous communities that live around the oil blocks, and the expansion of the oil frontier to other pristine indigenous territories. And how that will impact. A social, environmental impact to the indigenous nations. And we have seen what has happened" (personal communication, December 7, 2015).

Pablo Iturralde, an Ecuadorian scholar and NGO worker who has worked with indigenous populations in the Ecuadorian Amazon for over 10 years explains that these processes of land accumulation, extraction of resources, and then moving on to the next plot of land to exploit is a unique neoliberal feature and was a direct attack on the indigenous way of life and on their land, which holds a sacred and cultural meaning to indigenous peoples. Pablo says, “They (TNCs) come with a floriculture to put hundreds of thousands of dollars in technology packages that include pesticides and agrochemicals that will leave the land destitute, and once the ground is overexploited they move to another place, it is a neoliberal feature...the neoliberal era involved a very hard moment for the indigenous movement, because they took away land, allowed the concentration of land and the core of the indigenous movement is the community. Therefore, without land, they migrated to the cities and their community weakened” (personal communication, November 25, 2015). It should be noted that Correa’s government, which broadcasts itself as a ‘post-neoliberal government,’ has expanded the oil frontier and extractive projects in the Amazon. The only difference being that instead of the majority of profits leaving the country to transnational corporations, as was the case during the neoliberal governments in Ecuador, now the profits are going towards funding Correa’s infrastructure and social programs. While this is a positive change, these policies are undertaken at the expense of the indigenous people who live there and it continues the degradation of the land and environment of the Amazon (Becker, 2011).

The Zapatistas as well speak out against the destruction of the environment and the displacement of the indigenous peoples and communities that occurs in order to make way for extractive industries, infrastructure, as well as tourist or development projects. They see the government as foreigners, as corrupt officials who are under the direction of foreign capital and

imperialist nations. For that reason, during my visit to the Zapatista community, they refused to call myself, and other invited western visitors as *extranjeros* (Spanish word for foreigner), but rather as *internacionales* (internationals). This was because to them their government was composed of *extranjeros* but we were not as we were there in solidarity and to learn and to share in their struggle (Michael Blosser, field notes, July 7, 2015). The Zapatistas reference this struggle against environmental exploitation and the displacement of their and other indigenous communities in a recent communique saying, “Where the struggles for recognition of territorial rights continue against threats by mining companies, agrarian displacement, the theft of natural resources, and the subjugation of resistance by narco-paramilitaries, the originary peoples continue to make and remake themselves every day... A proliferation of hired hitmen operates in impunity to displace the indigenous peoples. The agroindustry of genetically modified organisms threatens the existence of the Mayan peoples, and those magnates, with vile dishonesty, take over agrarian territories, cultural and archeological sites, and even indigenous identity itself, trying to convert a vital people into a commercial fetish” (Zapatista Army of National Liberation, 2016).

*Government and paramilitary intimidation, division, and marginalization of the indigenous communities:*

The last category that arose out of the research data in the theme of western impact on indigenous communities is the government and paramilitary intimidation, division, and marginalization of indigenous peoples. This intimidation and repression has always been present in Ecuador and Mexico and escalates when indigenous organizations and social movements mount a resistance to the projects of extractive or agro-transnational industries or from the government. The government and paramilitary intimidation was very present when I visited the

Zapatista community, as the autonomous areas of the Zapatistas have been surrounded by a military occupation or surveillance since they rose up in 1994. When I was there in July 2015, our Zapatista hosts told us to not to leave the Zapatista compound or even talk about it once we left as there are still a lot of active paramilitaries around. In 1997, the Mexican government expelled 200 international students and activists who were working with the Zapatistas/sympathetic to the cause. They drew our attention to a heavy militarization buildup against the indigenous population and of Chiapas in Mexico with over 1,000 military installations in the area of Chiapas alone. From Oventic (the Zapatista community I stayed at) there is a military station/patrol 10 minutes in one direction and another one 20 minutes in another direction and paramilitaries are very active in the region (Michael Blosser, field notes, July 2015).

This government and paramilitary intimidation occurs in Ecuador as well, with paramilitary groups who are associated with the extractive industries who want the land that the indigenous communities live on resorting to bribes, intimidation, and even murder to destroy the resistance of indigenous and campesino organizations (Michael Blosser, field notes, October 20, 2016). One key way that the government and the transnational corporations were able to break the resistance to their projects was to either co-opt or divide the indigenous communities. Consuelo Fernandez, an Ecuadorian scholar who spent years doing ethnographic studies with the Shuar nation in the Ecuadorian amazon, explains the methods of how this co-option or division works: “And that’s why a lot of people end up accepting oil companies, mining companies, as they see it as their only option to get by. Several Shuar communities, maybe they don’t support the company itself or mining in the general ideological sense. But they see it as a way that they can capitalize on their land, or sell their land, or maybe work for the company...And maybe it is not

an intent to divide people but if you are offering something and one community wants it, or half the community wants it and the other one doesn't. Then you are going to create conflict and division. And that has happened in the North with the Cofan, the Sionas" (personal communication, December 2, 2015). Kar, an indigenous academic and member of the Shuar nation agrees, saying, "Well I can talk about the southern Amazon and that there is still oil or mining activity as there is in the northern Amazon. What we have seen and heard is that there is environmental damage, there are social problems, communities begin to divide and is already happening in the Amazon without any direct presence of oil exploration (in the case of the Shuar) there are already problems because few people said that they accept and that the conflict between those in favor and those against, that's a bad sign because there has not even been a state presence to discuss all these matters. The state should be trying to understand the parties involved but instead enters and divides them" (personal communication, December 16, 2015).

Similarly, the Zapatistas have experienced active attempts of the government, paramilitaries, and transnational corporations trying to divide their communities, in addition to measures of violence and intimidation. They showed us that when they build a school, agricultural project, or health center, the government builds one right next to the Zapatista building. They indicated that the Zapatistas do not accept any help from the government but the government gives surrounding villages gifts if they are anti-Zapatista. Moreover, that every 2 months the government comes and offers 2000 pesos to indigenous mothers if they agree to not work with the Zapatistas (Michael Blosser, field notes, July 7, 2015).

### **Methods of decolonization, resistance, and demands**

The second theme that arose in the research data came through participants' examples of moving forward as indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Mexico, their methods of decolonization, resistance and demands. Out of that theme, several subcategories arose in the coding, with multiple participants stressing the importance for their right to basic needs and services, their right to their territories, the right to self-determination and autonomy, and the need for the decolonization of the mind and the roles of international actors.

#### *Rights to Basic Needs and Services:*

When every participant was asked about the most pressing needs of the indigenous peoples, their first response was always about the right to have their basic needs and services met. My experience on the ground and the statistics taken from literature and non-governmental and governmental briefs confirmed that the indigenous populations in Ecuador and Mexico continue to suffer from extensive poverty, lack of education, lack of healthcare, and malnutrition. Some of the scholars who have researched indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Mexico have referred to this as 'a de-facto autonomy of neglect'. Leo Cerda explains how many of these rights were lost to indigenous peoples as the state transitioned to a westernized capitalistic model: "As we were going from a communitarian way of living to a more city, westernized version of living, and a lot of indigenous rights were lost in the transition coming from the rural areas to the cities. Most needs are basic rights, such as their territories and respect for their way of living" (personal communication, December 7, 2015).

The Zapatistas, instead of waiting for the state to provide adequate and accessible services to their indigenous communities, decided as part of their methods of decolonization and resistance

to create these services themselves. In their autonomous zones, the Zapatistas have succeeded in creating their own agricultural projects, education, and health infrastructure that are available and free to all. They have created autonomous health clinics and micro clinics. I was able to visit one and talk with the Zapatista doctors in the Zapatista village of Oventic. The clinic has an emergency room, a pharmacy, a dentistry area, a birthing room, a gynecology room, an ultrasound room, and 12 rooms for long stays at the hospital/clinic. The surgeons come on a 2-month schedule to perform complicated surgeries, but if the need is immediate, they go to the city to surgeons/hospitals that are sympathetic to the Zapatista movement. The doctors/ health teachers (*promotores de salud*) are able to perform basic to intermediate surgeries at the clinic in Oventic. The clinic is free to all as one of the doctors said, "Disease doesn't discriminate, why should we." The clinic in Oventic was started in 1992. The micro-clinics in the Zapatista villages coordinate with the clinic in the caracol and with the Junta de Buen Gobierno (their governing body). They practice about 50/50 modern medicine and natural medicine. People are chosen by the community or volunteer to be a health promoter. These clinics are associated with the micro-clinics in smaller Zapatista villages in order to set up a network for the villagers, in case the main Zapatista clinics are too far away (Michael Blosser, field notes, July 10th, 2015).

Similarly, the Zapatistas have created their own autonomous education conceived by the community because the government had supplied either bad or no educational services. Before the Zapatistas, most indigenous people did not have any access to a school. Now all of the five Zapatista caracoles (autonomous governing centers) have primary schools and Oventic (the caracol I visited) has a secondary school. Each caracol is organized differently concerning their projects, education, and healthcare infrastructure but the decisions they make are based on the

decisions from the community, directed from below, not above (Michael Blosser, field notes, July 13th, 2015).

The right to bicultural education was one of the main demands of the indigenous movement in Ecuador, and although that has been one of their achievements, the government institution that implements the program, CODENPE has recently been forced back into government control, causing the implementation to be poorly received by the indigenous communities.

*Rights to Territory:*

Another subcategory that emanated from the research data was the demand for the right to their territory. To the indigenous participants in my study, and especially the indigenous participants from the Ecuadorian Amazon, their territory was utterly important to the survival of their culture and ethnicity. Their historical territory was a sacred space to them, where food was cultivated and produced, where they hunted and fished, and where their cultural reproduction and continuation took place. Leonardo Cerda explains why territory is so important to indigenous communities in the Amazon, saying, “Land is for me, land is just a space. And territory means the relationship that you have, more cultural, with values and identity. I think it is very connected to values and identity, to the community and the relationship that you as a human being has with the environment. Because territory means you live there, you grow up there and leave it for the future generations. You cannot destroy your territory because it is part of your cultural system” (personal communication, December 7, 2015).

When the neoliberal governments in Mexico and Ecuador opened up the historical territory of the indigenous populations to the international market and displaced them from their land, it was a big blow to the indigenous communities, and one of the reasons for the politicization and mobilization of their movements. They saw this as an attack on their culture and ethnicity. The

Zapatistas rose up the day after the signing of the NAFTA, a free trade agreement that opened up previous communal lands to the international market, and the indigenous movement in Ecuador came to prominence in their mobilizations against the neoliberal governments. Kar, from the Shuar nation, explains why the privatization of and the displacement from their territory is such a big blow to indigenous peoples: “The concept of land, for the vast majority of indigenous peoples, is the space where culture, where man lives, their gods and nature itself develops. Human beings have a special relationship as land, not as an inert space, not as a space that is simply there because. For example, for some people it is the Pachamama, for Shuaras is the Nungüi where the mother earth goddess of fertility productivity dwells, there is a special relationship, there is a connection. When the Shuar woman will sow the product or will reap in the garden or on the farm, she sings the sacred songs which calls to Mother Earth what is to sow good fruits or ask permission to perform planting, is not like other cultures where land is an economic and productive resource, here there is a relationship” (personal communication, December 16, 2015).

It should be noted that while all the indigenous participants in the study stressed the importance of the right to territory for indigenous peoples, the strength and concept of that demand differed on the localities and ethnicities of the indigenous peoples. The indigenous people in the Sierra, who historically struggled against the Spanish hacienda system and had limited access to territory in their struggle, do not have as strong a pull to their historical territory as their indigenous comrades in the Amazon. The same can be said of the Zapatista communities in the mountain regions of Chiapas in contrast to the Zapatista communities in the Lacandon jungle. However, although their historical ties to their territory are different, both movements

have come together to demand and recognize the importance of the right to their territory (Michael Blosser, field notes, 2015).

*Self-determination and Autonomy/Plurinationality:*

Additionally, one of the demands and methods of decolonization that arose from the participants in the research data was their demand for self-determination and autonomy (in Ecuador this concept of autonomy was called plurinationality). This is the demand that has encountered the most resistance from the Ecuadorian and Mexican governments. These governments claim that the indigenous demand for self-determination and autonomy is a way for indigenous communities to secede from the nation-state or to demand their own sovereignty. According to Kar, this is not the case at all in regards to the indigenous peoples in Ecuador. He explains their concept of self-determination and plurinationality saying, “When I speak of recognition and exercise of rights it is to enable us, at least in the Amazon, the use and enjoyment of natural resources that exist in our territory, soil and subsoil...we say that do not ask us to develop in this way, we are not asking for a school or to build a building, we are saying ‘Mr. Government, State let me live my way according to my traditions and customs, in a way that doesn’t affect my territory because the territory is where the culture develops’... For me it is the political recognition of cultural diversity in the country where they allow each nationality and people to exercise their rights and development according to their own ways of life. For me the concept is where society is organized to manage their territory and culture according to their own ways of life within a plurinational state framework, not the creation of a state within a state” (Kar, personal communication, December 16, 2015).

The Zapatista concept and process of self-determination and autonomy is a little different from the Ecuadorian concept. After the government reneged on the San Andres accords in 1996,

the Zapatistas realized and decided that their process needed to be constructed outside the political process in Mexico. In doing that, they created five autonomous zones, called caracoles, which are completely autonomous; each with its own education facilities, good government junta, health facilities, agriculture projects etc... While each zone has its own autonomy, all the Zapatista communities and members collaborate and work together and come together for big reunions and if a decision has to be made that affects the whole movement. This autonomy that the Zapatistas have created has brought enormous rewards and benefits towards their education, health, advancement of women's rights, indigenous rights, and control and care of their own environment and land. However, since the Zapatistas completely reject any aid from the government and reject most aid from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), at times, the Zapatista communities do not produce enough to sustain them. Occasionally members have to go work in 'capitalistic society' for a salary and use it for their community: "since we live in a completely capitalistic world, we have no choice but to occasionally participate in it until another world is created" (Michael Blosser, field notes, July 9th, 2015).

The idea of nations within a nation that does not claim sovereignty is a new and revolutionary concept. Currently it is a concept that does not completely fit into our world that is made up of nation states. However, with the advent of globalization, borders and the role of the central government have had a reduced importance. Instead of lessening the autonomy of the central government through the international market as globalization has done, indigenous nations want to have a say in how they live their life and in how claims to territory, natural resources, education, healthcare, and justice are implemented in their communities. Manuela Picq, an academic and activist who has spent numerous years working with the indigenous peoples in Ecuador, explains the revolutionary concept of plurinationality:

“Indigeneity has a territorial dimension. It refers to native peoples, tribal peoples, non-European peoples. Plurinationality refers to claims to territory. It is not about trying to create a different state. It is not a political secession.

Plurinationality is self-autonomy but not separation of the state. A plurinational state has many nations in one state. Plurinationality refers to indigenous justice and indigenous authority over a certain territory... Plurinationality is about ending complete state sovereignty. It is a concept of a shared authority”

(Manuela Picq, field notes, November 24, 2015).

*Decolonization of the mind/roles of international actors:*

The final subcategory that emerged from the theme of methods of decolonization, demands and resistance is the process of decolonization of the mind and the role of international actors working with indigenous communities. In order to achieve their rights and finally move past the legacy of colonialism, a lot of indigenous scholars and organizations talk about the need to ‘decolonize the mind’. The Zapatistas stress that a way to start doing that is to reject capitalism and globalization and to reach out in solidarity internationally and to come together in order to find the ways to create a new and more just world. N, a Zapatista *promotor* and member of the EZLN says, “These are why we have these *encuentros* (reunions, meetings) as people need to meet and discuss how to change the world. Right now, no one has that answer to that question. The Zapatistas don’t have an answer to that question, we must discover it together. Zapatismo is process of meeting and sharing. The best weapon of capitalism is to separate the people. We must *desaprender* or unlearn what we have learned in capitalistic society” (Michael Blosser, field notes, July 14, 2015).

In this process of decolonization, the participants in the study stressed that this decolonization of the mind is a process that must be done by everyone, not only by the indigenous peoples, but also by the international actors who work with indigenous peoples and by members of everyday society. Since this unlearning process has not happened yet to most of the international actors who work with indigenous populations, the Zapatistas reject most aid and work from NGOs. When they do accept aid or projects from an NGO they ensure that their community has agreed to it and that they get to dictate the projects on their terms and the aid must be distributed to everyone in the community (Michael Blosser, field notes, July 7, 2015). Similarly, indigenous participants in Ecuador stressed that NGOs have traditionally imposed their wishes and projects on them or treated them in a paternalistic and demeaning fashion and that these international actors need to evolve as well as part of the decolonization process. Leo Cerda says, “I think that NGOs are idealized for the indigenous organizations, in providing support for communities and in defending their territories and their human rights, without them the Sarayaku case wouldn’t have been possible<sup>6</sup>. But NGOs need to also evolve. There is no more room for paternalism; there is a need for more empowerment of the indigenous people. I think the structure should be more empowering, allowing them to make their own decisions, their own steps, at their own pace. Not dictate what to do. But just to accompany them. Support them. There is a big difference between supporting and dictating. NGOs have their own agendas too” (personal communication, December 7, 2015).

In this process of decolonization, the indigenous leaders and activists I have met stress that this process can only be done together, and that solidarity is of the utmost importance. The Zapatistas think that their struggle shouldn’t be exported to your struggle, but instead it should be used as an example of creating a different world. That there is a need for a sharing of struggles,

of the creation of communities, each with their own form of living and in creating a democratic, free, and just world. In order to help this process, the Zapatistas left me with their seven principles of Zapatismo that they live by, and that possibly we as *internacionales* can learn from and use to create this better world. The seven principles of Zapatismo are:

Bajar y no subir – (from below not above)

Convencer y no vencer (convince not conquer)

Construir y no destruir (construct not destroy)

Representar y no suplantar (represent not supplant)

Proponer y no imponer (propose not impose)

Obedecer y no mandar (obey not order)

Servir y no servir se (serve not serve oneself)

(Michael Blosser, field notes, July 15, 2015).

This concludes the analysis of the two themes that arose from the research data: the theme of how western culture, governments, and globalization have affected indigenous peoples and the theme of the methods of decolonization, resistance, and demands of the indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Mexico. These themes emerged from the participants' actions and responses and gives an indigenous perspective, in their own words and actions, of how they have been impacted and their resistance, demands, and processes of decolonization.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Significance of Study

The purpose of this research study was to hear from an indigenous perspective how western structures and globalization have affected indigenous peoples. Additionally, the purpose of this research was to hear and observe from indigenous peoples themselves their modes of resisting, their demands to the western world, and their ways and methods of moving forward and interacting in this globalized world. When looking at the analyzed data from the research participants, clear themes arose that were pertinent to those research questions. This discussion will look at the results and discuss their relevance to the research questions in this study, their significance, how these results relate to, confirm, or contradict the current literature on these topics, possible future research, and finally comment on the limitations and weaknesses of this research study.

A main part of this study's research question is to look at the impact of western culture/globalization on indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Mexico from their own perspective. As one can see with the themes that arose during the data analysis, the results from the participant data indicate that western culture and/or globalization have had a very detrimental impact on indigenous culture, their territory, and on their general wellbeing. Participants showed how they (indigenous peoples) are still highly marginalized, subject to individual and systematic racism that belittles their culture and language, keeps them uneducated and in poverty, and treated in a paternalistic fashion by either government or non-governmental bodies. The participants in this study indicated that transnational corporations have pushed them off, exploited and destroyed their land, and divided, co-opted, intimidated, or killed their people in face of resistance to the companies' extractive, infrastructure, or development projects. The

participants stress that not only has their land been privatized and exploited, but their culture as well has been commodified and sold in this globalized world. One can conclude from these results that western culture and globalization have had a devastating impact on the culture, land, rights, and general wellbeing of indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Mexico. This contradicts the claim of Hales (2004) that globalization would provide a better avenue for indigenous populations when compared to the previous corporatist relationships that the Ecuadorian and Mexican state had with their indigenous populations. The findings of this study indicate that both have affected indigenous populations in overwhelmingly negative but different ways.

These findings parallel current literature that has done research on the impact of globalization on indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Mexico. Sawyer (2004) and O’Faircheallaigh (2013)’s research similarly found that transnational corporations, with the assistance of the state, have displaced and divided people, and have exacerbated poverty in indigenous communities in Ecuador. Indigenous scholars and participants in this research study indicated how important their land and their territory is to their culture and way of life, confirming findings that were brought up in current literature (Jung, 2003; Yashar, 2005; Alfred & Cornassel, 2005; Bolanos, 2011). The results of this research study also concurs with the findings of Yashar (2007) that proposed that the indigenous mobilizations and movements in Ecuador and Mexico in the 1990s did not appear in a vacuum. That the movements were responding to the policies of globalization as other literature has proposed, but also that the indigenous movements were in existence before then as well. Results from participant data show that indigenous peoples have been organizing in response to western impact long before neoliberal policies were implemented. However, data in this research study also indicates that the impact of neoliberal policies on indigenous peoples helped politicize, mobilize, and unify the indigenous movement against a “common enemy.”

That is not to say that every participant thought that the impact of western culture/globalization has been completely negative. One of the indigenous participants stressed that while NGOs needed to evolve and stop paternalizing and disempowering the indigenous populations that they worked with, he also recognized that the success of the Sarayaku case, (*Case of the Kichwa indigenous people of Sarayaku v. Ecuador, 2012*)<sup>6</sup> in the Inter-American court of Human Rights which won concessions from oil companies and the Ecuadorian state, would possibly never have happened without the help of NGOs. In addition, while the data emphasizes the negative impact that western culture/globalization has had on indigenous populations, not one research participant indicated that they reject interaction with the western world. The participants stressed only that the western world needs to recognize and validate their demands and that while the interaction needed to evolve and be more empowering, that there were still very important roles that non-indigenous actors had to play in their struggle.

Additionally, the findings of this research study helped to elucidate the discourses, resistance, daily life, and methods of decolonization of the Zapatistas and the indigenous movement in Ecuador. Out of the analysis of the participant data, numerous themes arose in regards to that research question. The indigenous participants stressed the need for the right to basic needs and services (education, healthcare, and nutrition), the right to their territory, the right to their own self-determination and autonomy, the need for the decolonization of the mind, and finally the role they see for international/non-indigenous actors. Findings in the research study elucidated the meaning of indigenous autonomy, self-determination, and/or plurinationality, stressing that they as indigenous peoples didn't want their own sovereignty or to secede from their nation state. Instead, they want the ability to hold on to their culture and land, for the recognition of their customs, languages, and ethnicity, and to live and use their resources not according to how the

state, transnational corporations, or NGOs want, but according to how they, the indigenous peoples see fit.

This research is significant as it helps elaborate on current literature that has looked into the demands and methods of resistance and living of the Zapatistas in Mexico (Morton, 2002; Harvey, 2005; Stahler-Stolk, 2007; Evans, 2009) and the indigenous movement in Ecuador (Perrault, 2001; Yashar, 2005; Becker; 2011; Jameson; 2011). This was done by allowing the indigenous voices to be at the forefront of the discussion. The indigenous movement and its interactions with the western world is constantly evolving and changing, requiring the need for constantly updated research on these movements. Even the most significant work on the Zapatistas (as proclaimed and endorsed by the Zapatistas themselves) by Ramirez et al. (2008) is around 8 years old, necessitating updated research studies that can elucidate the current demands and methods of decolonization that both the Zapatistas and the indigenous movement in Ecuador are currently undertaking.

### **Limitations & Weaknesses**

There were some limitations and weaknesses in this research study that should be recognized. The first is the limitation of doing qualitative research. Qualitative research, while allowing the narrative and story of the participants to take central stage, also may lack sufficient focus and can allow the subjective lens of the researcher to cloud the results. In order for qualitative research to have validity and transferability, numerous researchers would need to code the data and differing methodological approaches of gathering data would need to be tried. If similar results were found, then the data would have validity and transferability. However, in this current research study, time constraints have prevented both of those tests to be carried out, creating a weakness in this research study.

As mentioned above, time constraints have put a set of limitations on this research study. Due to time constraints, a limited amount of time was spent in the field and a limited number of participants were found to agree to interviews. This research study wanted to answer the research questions from an indigenous perspective and although the majority of the data is focused on that prerogative, only two weeks was spent in the Zapatista village of Oventic, and only five interviews were done with participants who self-identified as indigenous. In a longer research study, more effort would be undertaken in order to spend a longer time in the field living and working with indigenous communities and in order to find more indigenous interviewees.

Finally, although the researcher did the best he could to follow the research guidelines for non-indigenous researchers who do research with indigenous populations put forth by Smith (1999) in the book *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*, it should still be recognized that the positionality of the researcher; being white, male, and a westerner, most likely affected the results. More effort in recognizing one's own positionality and more time spent with indigenous communities would have helped build more trust between the researcher and the participants, allowing better access to key leaders and informants, and therefore giving this study more interview participants and time in the field.

### **Recommendations**

As someone who comes from a privileged western background it would be inappropriate and unacceptable for me to give recommendations to indigenous organizations struggling for their rights and their existence. However, after a year of working with, listening to, and analyzing the responses of indigenous peoples, I do feel compelled to give recommendations to governments, academics, and non-profit/non-governmental organizations.

## **Government**

The current relationships between western neoliberal governments such as the United States and Mexico with their indigenous populations have been nothing short of an all-out attack on their land, culture, rights, and existence. Post-neoliberal governments such as the current Correa administration in Ecuador have talked a good “game” about the need of inclusion and rights of their indigenous peoples in Ecuador and in their 2008 constitution. However, the implementation has been limited and the relationship between the government and the indigenous peoples has been almost as destructive and marginalizing as the neoliberal governments that came before. In order for indigenous rights in Ecuador and Mexico and throughout the world to come to fruition, a dramatic change in the interaction and discourse between the government and their indigenous peoples are needed. My recommendations for the governments are thus:

- Stop actively killing, intimidating, and dividing indigenous peoples in order to ensure the passage of some governmental or transnational corporation’s project. Do not allow paramilitary organizations, governmental and local police, and military forces to act with impunity in their treatment of indigenous peoples and organizations.
- Listen to, include, and empower your indigenous populations in political activity and social discourse. Stop patronizing them, telling them what to do and how to act, and stop looking at them as infantile in this neo-colonialist, racist lens. Do not delegitimize, minimize, discourage, or disparage their language, culture, and traditions.

- Allow your indigenous peoples certain degrees of self-determination and autonomy. Progress imposed in a top-down way has proven never to be sustainable or progressive. The indigenous peoples want to be active and fruitful members of their nation-state; but only if they are allowed to live their lives as they see fit, and to be included in the political, economic, and social discourse of the country.
- When trans-national capital is found guilty of violation of international human rights law, do not let them escape their sentence by picking up and going to another country where those laws do not apply to them (which has happened with the Chevron/ Texaco case in Ecuador<sup>7</sup>). Ensure that your government is abiding by international human rights law agreements that you have signed which recognizes various rights of indigenous peoples and if a trans-national corporation or agency from your country has been found guilty of transgressions, hold them accountable to the sentence that was delivered.

### **Non-profit/non-governmental organizations and academics:**

There are numerous international actors, be they non-profit, non-governmental organizations or academics who positively interact with indigenous peoples and nationalities. This relationship has progressed over the years with more and more groups and people listening instead of telling, empowering instead of disempowering, accompanying instead of leading, when they work with indigenous populations. However, while progress has been made, there are still too many occurrences where the Eurocentric voice speaks over or speaks for the indigenous voice, and there are still numerous non-profit and non-governmental organizations who interact with indigenous peoples in a patronizing, disempowering, and dictatorial way. Indigenous actors

have set out clear roles and ways of non-indigenous support, listen to what they have to say and treat them as equals; only then can we truly be a part of the decolonization process.

### **Future Research**

There is still much research to be done on the impact of western culture and globalization on indigenous peoples and their ways of resisting and living in this globalized world. The recommendations for areas of future research in relation to this research study are as follows:

- A similar but longer, more in-depth research study that looks at and explores indigenous organization, resistance, demands, interaction with the western world, and ways of living. This study would be for a minimum of two years, with at least one year of field research, and involve many more participants who self-identify as indigenous.
- A research study that explores how globalization/neoliberal policies have affected other marginalized groups in the world. A lot of the current globalization research is focused on the macro-level (economy, GDP, growth, amount of trade, etc....) and fails to take into account or have a detailed analysis of how these globalization policies affect the individuals and communities on the ground.
- Themes that arose in the data that weren't related to the research questions but could provide avenues for further research include the following: the need for solidarity amongst indigenous peoples internationally, the need for solidarity from non-indigenous national and international actors, and the need for the national and regional indigenous organizations to better represent and more closely listen to and advocate for their local indigenous bases and communities.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

After undertaking this research study on the effect of western culture and globalization on indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Mexico and their modes of resistance, living, and decolonization, I must make some very clear and important conclusions and final remarks. It should be noted that since the Zapatista uprising in 1994 in Mexico and the indigenous mobilizations in the 1990s in Ecuador much progress has been made in the recognition of indigenous rights and culture. However, being indigenous in these countries is still the number one indicator of being in poverty, and indigenous peoples are still very much violently marginalized and displaced and treated with a racist lens by the rest of society.

The dangers and obstacles that indigenous peoples still face in these countries are best exemplified by the small number of people who self-identify as indigenous (~8% Ecuador; ~10% in Mexico ) in both countries compared to those who fit the statistical category as indigenous (~20-40% in Mexico; ~30- 40% in Ecuador)<sup>2,3</sup>. The political power and rights of indigenous peoples in Ecuador have improved under the Correa administration in comparison to Mexico, but still most of the indigenous people who self-identify in Ecuador and Mexico are indigenous leaders or activists who do so as a political statement, as indigenous peoples are still treated with high degrees of racism, intimidation, and repression. The findings from this research study clearly indicate that indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Mexico have been negatively affected by western culture and globalization and are still highly marginalized peoples.

However, the data in this research study also indicates that progress has been made, and that the indigenous movements in Ecuador and Mexico have come together and gained numerous rights for themselves and their communities and are continuing forward with their demands and their methods of decolonization. This research study provides an insider view of their demands,

ways of resisting and living, and the methods of decolonization that have been undertaken by the Zapatistas in Mexico and by the indigenous movement in Ecuador.

For too long the indigenous peoples of these nations have been left in a state of marginalization and neglect and have not been allowed to be part of the political or social conversation. Since the mobilizations in the 1990s, both indigenous movements have demanded “*Ya basta*” (Enough, already), and throughout their resistance and struggle over the past 30 years have inserted themselves in the national and international conversation and have won numerous concessions from the State and transnational corporations. They have created new ways of living that finally allows them to live a dignified life. This research study has shown that the indigenous peoples in these countries are still suffering, but it has also shown ways that the indigenous peoples can finally be awarded equal rights and respect and be part of a multicultural country that struggles for the democracy, freedom, and justice for all.

*“The idea of Zapatismo is the same idea of all people, to have a community that is autonomous, free, and democratic.”*

(N, Zapatista member, Field Notes, July 6, 2015)

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## I. Appendices

### Appendix I: Interview Questions

Michael Blosser

#### Primary Interview Protocol for Indigenous Peoples

1. What nationality or people do you belong to?
2. What area/region in Ecuador/Mexico do you live?
3. Do you belong to an indigenous local/regional/national group? If so which ones?
4. In your opinion, what are the biggest needs/goals for the indigenous people in Ecuador/Mexico and for your particular nationality?
5. (In Ecuador) Are these goals/needs different at the local level than those pushed for by the national organizations (such as CONAIE, ECUARNARI, CONFENAIE)?
6. (In Mexico) How does the junta de buen gobierno ensure that the local voices of the community are heard?
7. (In Mexico) What are the most important elements of your identity as an indigenous person in Mexico? What does being a Zapatista mean to you? How is your identity similar and different to the other indigenous nationalities in Mexico?
8. (In Ecuador) What are the most important elements of your identity as an indigenous person in Ecuador? What does being a \_\_\_\_\_ nationality mean to you? How is your identity similar and different to the other indigenous nationalities in Ecuador?
9. (In Ecuador) How is your nationality different than your ethnicity? What does the term plurinationality mean to you?
10. What does the concept of territory mean to you, to your nationality, and to the indigenous movement?
11. Is the idea of territory different than the idea of land? How so?
12. Does territory have an important relationship with your culture and identity?
13. How has the right to your territory and land changed over the years? How so?
14. What effects have extractive industries had on your environment, territory, culture, and livelihoods?
15. (In Mexico) How has NAFTA affected you, your livelihood, and your community? (In Ecuador) How has the neoliberal policies affected you, your livelihood, and your community?
16. Do you want to be autonomous from the Ecuadorian/Mexican government? Or be part of the Mexican/Ecuadorian state but have various autonomous rights for indigenous peoples?
17. Do you believe that your government will ever recognize the concerns of the indigenous people in Ecuador/Mexico?
18. Why did your community decide to rise up and resist in the 1990s? Do you agree with that decision? Has the indigenous movement in Ecuador/Mexico changed from the 90s to now?
19. How accessible was education and healthcare to people in your community before and after the resistance movement?
20. Is your movement specifically anti-capitalist? If so what alternative forms of economic systems are you using in order to survive in this globalized and capitalistic world?
21. Do you see a role of NGO's or other types of international allies in your community? If so, what role?

22. What do you think is the most important next step for your community and movement?
23. Do you see your struggle as a nationalistic struggle or an international struggle of all indigenous peoples around the world?

Primary Interview Protocol for Researchers/Academics

1. What organization/academic institution do you belong to?
2. What work/research have you done with indigenous peoples in Ecuador/Mexico?
3. In your opinion, what are the biggest needs for the indigenous people in Ecuador/Mexico?
4. (In Ecuador) Are these goals different at the local level than those pushed for by the national organizations (such as CONAIE, ECUARNARI, CONFENAIE)?
5. (In Mexico) How does the junta de buen gobierno ensure that the local voices of the community are heard?
6. How is the idea of nationality different then the idea ethnicity? (In Ecuador) What does the term plurinationality mean to you?
7. What do you think the concept of territory means to the indigenous movement?
8. Is the idea of territory different than the idea of land? How so?
9. How has the indigenous movement in Mexico/Ecuador changed over the last 30 years? What has been some of its successes and what still needs to be done?
10. What effects have extractive industries had on Ecuador/Mexico's environment, territory, culture, and livelihoods?
11. (In Mexico) How has NAFTA affected Mexico, and in particularly the indigenous population? (In Ecuador) How has the neoliberal policies affected Ecuador, and in particular, the indigenous population?
12. Does the indigenous movement want to be autonomous from the Ecuadorian/Mexican government? Or be part of the Mexican/Ecuadorian state but have various autonomous rights for indigenous peoples?
13. Do you believe that the current government will ever recognize the concerns of the indigenous people in Ecuador/Mexico?
14. How accessible was education and healthcare to indigenous people before and after the resistance movement?
15. Is the indigenous movement specifically anti-capitalist?
16. Do you see a role of NGO's or other types of international allies in the indigenous movement in Ecuador/Mexico? If so, what role?
17. What do you think is the most important next step for the indigenous community and movement?
18. Do you see the indigenous struggle in Mexico/Ecuador as a nationalistic struggle or an international struggle of all indigenous peoples around the world?

Protocolo Entrevista primaria para los Pueblos Indígenas

1. ¿A qué nacionalidad pertenece usted?
2. ¿En qué área / región en el Ecuador / México vive usted?
3. ¿usted pertenece a un grupo indígena local / regional / nacional?
4. En su opinión, ¿cuáles son las mayores necesidades para los pueblos indígenas en Ecuador / México y de su nacionalidad en particular?
5. (En Ecuador) ¿Son estos objetivos diferentes a nivel local que las impulsado por las organizaciones nacionales?
6. (En México) ¿Cómo la junta de buen gobierno asegurar que las voces locales de la comunidad sean escuchadas?
7. (En México) ¿Cuáles son los elementos más importantes de su identidad como un indígena en México? ¿Qué significa ser un zapatista para usted? ¿Cómo es su identidad similar y diferente a las otras nacionalidades indígenas en México?
8. (En Ecuador) ¿Si tu identificas como \_\_\_\_\_ qué significa ser esta nacionalidad para usted? Cuales están los cosas más importantes ser un \_\_\_\_\_?  
¿Cómo es su identidad similar y diferente a las otras nacionalidades indígenas de Ecuador?
9. ¿Cómo es su nacionalidad diferente a su origen étnico? ¿Qué significa el término plurinacionalidad a usted?
10. ¿Qué significa el concepto de territorio para usted, a su nacionalidad, y para el movimiento indígena?
11. ¿Es la idea de territorio diferente a la idea de la tierra? ¿Cómo es eso?
12. ¿El territorio tiene una relación importante con su cultura y su identidad?
13. ¿Cómo el derecho a la tierra y el territorio cambió con los años?
14. ¿Qué y cuáles son los efectos de las industrias extractivas en el medio ambiente y formas de vida en Ecuador / de México?
15. (En México) ¿Cómo ha afectado el TLCAN que, su medio de vida, y su comunidad? (En Ecuador) ¿Cómo las políticas neoliberales han afectado los pueblos indígenas en Ecuador?
16. ¿El movimiento indígena quiere ser autónomo del gobierno ecuatoriano / mexicano? ¿O ser parte del estado mexicano / ecuatoriano, pero tienen distintos derechos autónomos para los pueblos indígenas?
17. ¿Cree usted que el gobierno de Ecuador / México nunca va reconocer los derechos de los pueblos indígenas?
18. ¿Qué tan accesible era la educación y la salud a los pueblos indígenas antes y después los políticas neoliberales?
19. ¿Es el movimiento indígena específicamente anticapitalista?
20. ¿Ves un papel de las ONG u otros tipos de aliados internacionales en el movimiento indígena en Ecuador / México? Si es así, ¿qué papel?
21. ¿Cuál crees que es el siguiente punto más importante para la comunidad y el movimiento indígena?
22. ¿Tú ves la lucha indígena en México / Ecuador como una lucha nacionalista o una lucha internacional de todos los pueblos indígenas de todo el mundo?

Protocolo Entrevista primaria para los investigadores / académicos

1. ¿A qué organización / institución académica pertenece usted?
2. ¿Cuál trabajo de investigación realizó usted con los pueblos indígenas en Ecuador / México?
3. En su opinión, ¿cuáles son las necesidades más grandes para los pueblos indígenas en Ecuador / México?
4. ¿Son estos objetivos diferentes en los distintos niveles de las organizaciones indígenas, local, nacional?
5. (En México) ¿Cómo la junta de buen gobierno asegura que las voces locales de la comunidad sean escuchadas?
6. ¿Cómo es la idea de nacionalidad diferente a la idea de la etnia? (En Ecuador) ¿Qué significa el término plurinacionalidad a usted?
7. ¿Qué crees puede significar el concepto de territorio para el movimiento indígena?
8. ¿Es la idea de territorio diferente a la idea de la tierra? ¿Cómo es eso?
9. ¿Cómo tiene el movimiento indígena en México / Ecuador cambiado en los últimos 30 años? ¿Cuál ha sido algunos de sus éxitos y de lo que aún queda por hacer?
10. ¿Qué y cuáles son los efectos de las industrias extractivas en el medio ambiente y formas de vida en Ecuador / de México?
11. (En México) ¿Cómo ha afectado el TLCAN a México, y en particular a la población indígena? (En Ecuador) ¿Cómo las políticas neoliberales han afectado los pueblos indígenas en Ecuador?
12. ¿El movimiento indígena quiere ser autónomo del gobierno ecuatoriano / mexicano? ¿O ser parte del estado mexicano / ecuatoriano, pero tienen distintos derechos autónomos para los pueblos indígenas?
13. ¿Cree usted que este gobierno de Ecuador / México nunca va reconocer los derechos de los pueblos indígenas?
14. ¿Qué tan accesible era la educación y la salud a los pueblos indígenas antes y después de las políticas neoliberales?
15. ¿Es el movimiento indígena específicamente anticapitalista?
16. ¿Ves un papel de las ONG u otros tipos de aliados internacionales en el movimiento indígena en Ecuador / México? Si es así, ¿qué papel?
17. ¿Cuál crees que es el siguiente punto más importante para la comunidad y el movimiento indígena?
18. ¿Tú ves la lucha indígena en México / Ecuador como una lucha nacionalista o una lucha internacional de todos los pueblos indígenas de todo el mundo?

## Appendix II: Notes

<sup>1</sup> Hacienda is the Spanish word for a large estate or ranch.

<sup>2</sup>It is hard to find an exact number with regards to the percentage of indigenous populations in regards to Ecuador's total population. This has to do with very few indigenous people self-identifying as indigenous (only 7% in the last 2010 census) while much more will admit speaking an indigenous language or practice indigenous customs. This has led groups such as CONAIE and numerous researchers to estimate that the actual percentage of the indigenous population in Ecuador is in the range of 30-38% of the general population.

<sup>3</sup> Due to similar reasons, official ranges and statistics of the indigenous population in Mexico ranges from 10% to 40%, depending on the source.

<sup>4</sup>Image taken from the website, <http://www.ecuador-travel.net/culture.ethnic.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Image taken from the website, <https://casitacolibri.wordpress.com/tag/indigenous-peoples/>

<sup>6</sup> Mestizo is the Spanish word for mixed race, normally from European and indigenous descent.

<sup>7</sup> Information on the Sarayaku case in Ecuador:  
[http://corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec\\_245\\_ing.pdf](http://corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_245_ing.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Information on the Chevron case in Ecuador: <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-chevron-ecuador-20160808-snap-story.html>