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Pronominal choice, identity, and solidarity in political discourse*

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Abstract

This paper presents an empirical analysis of the pragmatic role that pronouns expressing person deixis have in the speeches of two Mexican participants in a conference on the Chiapas revolt of January 1994 in Mexico.

I argue that pronominal choice in political discourse reflects differences in the way in which speakers present themselves with respect to other individuals and groups in the political arena and in relation to the situation that is being discussed.

I reanalyze the concept of speaker involvement in order to distinguish between involvement of a speaker with the topic, commitment to his own words and identification with other groups or individuals. I show how these different dimensions can be related to Goffman's notion of 'production format' and how the concept of 'principal' can be used to define solidarity in political discourse.

Finally, I stress that understanding of the pragmatic implications of pronominal choice depends on a detailed analysis of the presence of all pronouns in a given text, and that the speaker's identity emerges through consistent use of certain pronouns with a stable referent and through the oppositions and connections established in the text between these referents and the referents of other pronominal and non pronominal forms.

Keywords: *political discourse; discourse analysis; pragmatics; pronouns; deixis.*

1. Introduction

The deictic nature of pronouns, that is their ability to encode important features of the context of utterance has been analyzed and discussed by logicians, linguists, anthropologists and philosophers of language.

Benveniste, for example, placed personal pronouns at the heart of pragmatic theory by describing them as empty signs that only become full when used in actual discourse. According to him: 'their role is to provide the instrument of a conversion that one could call the conversion of language into discourse' (1971: 219–220).

Person deixis has been studied extensively within linguistic theory (see for example Jakobson, 1957; Lyons, 1977; Levinson, 1983). But nowadays a vast body of literature exists on different aspects of the meanings of pronominal usage. A broad distinction can be traced between more sociologically or sociolinguistically oriented and more pragmatically oriented studies of pronouns. The first type of studies have looked at pronouns within social deixis, that is, they have shown how pronominal paradigms systematically encode: 'the social identities of participants or the social relationships between them, or between one of them and persons and entities referred to' (Levinson, 1983: 89).

One of the pioneering works in this field was a paper by Brown and Gilman (1960) in which the authors analyzed how in four Western European languages the evolution in the structure and use of pronominal systems reflected a shift in society from a more rigid and asymmetrical model towards a more solidary and flexible one. Further studies in this area have been carried out, among others by Silverstein (1976); Wallace and Tucker (1976); Friedrich (1979); Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990).

A different body of works on the other hand, has been devoted to analyzing less systematic and more contextually dependent uses of pronouns, showing how these items can encode different aspects of the communicative intentions of speakers. Wilson (1990: 47) refers to this approach as 'pragmatic' in that the meaning associated with pronominal usage is not systematically related to variables such as formality, status, class, sex or the like, but is more dependent on the specific context of utterance and the roles and goals of the speaker(s).

This distinction does not imply that pragmatic meanings are idiosyncratic and totally unpredictable. In fact, pronominal forms can be manipulated to convey implicit meanings based on their structural semantic properties. For example, the pronoun 'we' can convey empathy because of its structural property of encoding the meaning: [speaker + addressee]. Similarly the pronoun 'you' can convey a meaning of deresponsabilization of the speaker because of its structural ability to encode indefinite reference.

Among pragmatic studies of the significance of pronouns in discourse we find, for example, Maitland and Wilson (1987) and Wilson (1990) who showed how individual politicians vary in the use of the pronominal system according to scales of distancing/involvement of self with respect

to the topics under discussion or the discourse participants. From a more quantitative perspective, Urban (1988) and Connor-Linton (1988) analyzed how specific uses of the pronoun 'we' contribute to the rhetorical objectives of texts on the nuclear problem. Connor-Linton (in press) also offered a quantitative analysis of pronouns looking at the way pronominal choice reflects different conceptualizations about aspects of the context in cross-cultural communication. In a recent paper Zupnik (1994), discussed pronominal choice in connection with persuasiveness in the analysis of the political discourse of one participant in a televised political debate. She showed how vagueness of reference in this kind of discourse can be related to a continuous switch between different social identities and how this switch can help the speaker achieve persuasive effects. This author emphasizes the fact that most studies of pronouns and deixis in public discourse do not deal with the process of pronominal resolution but mainly with the product of it as presented by the analyst. This is particularly true for quantitative analyses of pronominal choice, where the criteria for the attribution of certain referents to pronouns are not discussed.

There are nonetheless some interesting contributions to the study of person deixis in political discourse within the so called 'French school of discourse analysis' (Boutet, 1989: 9) which has had promising developments also in Latin America. These studies are qualitatively oriented and have more explicit indications on the way reference is attributed in texts. Guespin (1976) for example, contrasted two speeches given by Leon Blum in 1935 and 1936 and showed that even words which are not 'deictics' in the traditional sense, like the term 'Party' can be used as substitutes for personal pronouns and encode important features of the situation of utterance. In this analysis Guespin argued for the existence of different textual configurations related to the different roles that the speaker impersonated as a political actor.

Interesting connections between pronominal choices and speaker responsibility were suggested by Gardin (1976) and Lavandera (1985). Gardin studied the employment of the pronoun 'on' in the discourse of industrial managers as opposed to the discourse of the trade unions as an ideological strategy of 'masking' to avoid reference to specific political groups and therefore to escape social responsibility. Lavandera (1985) looked at similar processes of deresponsabilization in quotative constructions in the discourse on the Argentine *desaparecidos* and in this context she briefly analyzed the use of constructions with impersonal *se* in Spanish as a similar strategy to avoid discourse responsibility.

In most of these works related to the French School person deixis is placed within the frame of the study of ideology and is part of more

general analyses of the discourse of greater political groupings like, for example, the 'left' or the 'right' in particular countries. The attribution of values to specific linguistic items is done within the parameters imposed by 'discourse formations', that is, social discourse practices that determine what the individual can and must say (Bonnafue, 1983: 9).

There are certain limitations that derive from these theoretical premises. First of all, the main orientation in the study of discourse is historical, that is, discourse is analyzed mainly as a product of general social conditions and practices which are already given and established outside its more concrete and specific circumstances of production. Secondly, interactional dynamics in the communication are not included given that most texts analyzed are written and given that individuals are seen as representatives of more general 'social voices'.

In this paper my emphasis is in the opposite direction: I would like to show how by looking at pronominal choice in the speech of individual speakers it is possible to reconstruct the way they present themselves in relation to a political conflict and how this analysis can contribute to an overall understanding of the objectives and significance of that speech. I do so by studying a context that has been relatively neglected: that of semi-spontaneous political discourse, that is discourse which is partly pre-written and partly improvised by speakers and by analyzing the speech of politicians who are not prominent representatives of parties. In this kind of situation and of discourse the establishment of political identity is an issue both for the speaker and for the hearer and must be described as emerging mostly from the way the text is constructed. Moreover I will deal with participants in a conflict which is still in progress, like the Chiapas revolt, because I think that it is precisely looking at the way speakers represent the conflict and themselves in it, that we can have a preliminary understanding of the issues at stake.

Secondly, I will not concentrate on single pronominal oppositions, on specific rhetorical functions of pronouns or on individual styles, as most authors have done, but I will look at pronominal selection as a whole to show how this is a variable that distinguishes different ways in which speakers present themselves with respect to other participants and groups involved in the same conflict and with respect to the conflict itself. Pronominal choice is therefore seen in this paper not so much as a variable related to speaker's styles, but as a coherent indication of the speaker's presentation of self.

The analysis will focus on the process of resolution of pronominal choice, showing how equivalences between the reference of different pronouns can only be established in context and how both consistency

and ambiguity of reference contribute to the emergence of a speaker's identity in discourse.

Finally, I will argue that pronominal choice signals different ways in which the speaker is present in a text and that therefore the notion of involvement which has been related to the use of pronouns by different authors (for example, Maitland and Wilson, 1987; and Wilson, 1990) should be reanalyzed to distinguish between various dimensions of speaker commitment. I will argue that the notions proposed by Goffman (1981) to describe 'production formats' can be used to characterize different types of involvement and to distinguish identification of the speaker with other groups or individuals from solidarity with them.

1.1. *Pronouns, participation frameworks and political discourse*

One of the basic theoretical premises of this paper is that language is always reflexive; in other terms, that part of our understanding of the meaning or function of texts derive from the possibility of placing them within the contexts in which they were created. Within this perspective language becomes discourse through the 'act of taking possession of the language' by an individual speaker (Benveniste, 1966: 80, my translation). This original act is in some ways always represented in discourse and therefore texts always bear the traces of the presence of the participants in the communicative situation and cannot be understood without taking into consideration the relationships that they entertain with the speakers that produced them and the spatio-temporal coordinates in which they are inscribed.

Among the mechanisms of this anchorage of discourse to context are the classical deictic processes that Parret (1983: 87) calls 'personification', 'temporalization' and 'spatialization'. The study of 'personification' in discourse is therefore one of the ways in which we can understand the relationships between texts and users of the language. Within this perspective the subject is inscribed in discourse, but not necessarily in an explicit fashion. As Parret (1983: 84) puts it: 'The subject shows himself, does not tell himself'. In this sense the traces of subjectivity in discourse point at the expression of attitudes and stances with respect to topics and other people, that are revealed by specific linguistic choices.

These concepts are particularly relevant for political discourse, in that comprehension of a message within this type of discourse crucially involves an understanding of the position of the speaker with respect to other social actors, entities and events in the outer world. Pronominal reference is one of the mechanisms through which the speaker expresses

both his own presence in discourse, the presence of others and the relationships that he/she entertains with these others.

Such relationships are captured by Goffman's notion (1981) of 'participation frameworks'. According to this author, speech events must be analyzed within the social activity in which they are embedded. This determines different kinds of conditions of production of discourse. The notion of 'reception format' describes the relationships established between the speaker and the audience and implies a redefinition of the simple category of 'hearer', such that it is possible to distinguish among the different roles that listeners can have in a speech event. In a social event like the one considered, that is a conference on political issues (which Goffman would describe as 'speech from a podium'), the intended recipients do not necessarily coincide with the audience as a whole and pronominal choices can give indications on whom the real addressees of the text are.

Similarly, resorting to the notion of 'production format' it is possible to distinguish within the category of 'speaker', the *animator* (the physical utterer of the words), the *author*, (someone responsible for the message) and the *principal* (an individual, group or social category represented in the speech).

I would like to show how these notions can help distinguish between different modes of involvement of the self in discourse. In fact involvement can be seen as personal participation in a topic, and in this case it only implies personalization. It can also be seen as personal commitment of the speaker to his own words and in this case it implies authorship. Maitland and Wilson (1987) and Wilson (1990), for example use these two dimensions of involvement to construct pronominal scales that reflect speakers choices on a continuum of commitment/distance. But involvement can also be seen as identification with other groups or individuals and it can therefore imply representation. Constant employment of a pronoun like 'I', for example, may indicate a high degree of involvement of the speaker with a topic or a commitment to 'authorship', but does not tell anything about the speaker's relationship to others, while use of a pronoun like 'we' can both give indications on authorship and on identification with others. Identification is, nonetheless, a matter of degrees and it has been shown that it can be a tactical device to reach certain persuasive goals (Zupnik, 1994). I think that it is important to distinguish tactical identification of the speaker with other groups or individuals from solidarity. I propose to define solidarity as a consistent indication by the speaker of the existence of another agent as a *principal* of the speech, and a principal with whom he/she signals (through pro-

nominal choice and continuity of reference) an organic (as opposed to a tactical) identification.

These different dimensions of involvement are, in my view, very important to characterize the position of a speaker within a political conflict and are signalled, as I shall show in the analysis below by differences in pronominal choice.

2. Method

2.1. *Pronominal systems in English and Spanish*

The two speeches that constitute this paper's data were delivered in different languages: Juárez's speech was in Spanish and Cordera's speech was in English. Therefore for the analysis it was necessary to take into account both the pronominal systems of English and of Mexican Spanish. My implicit premise is that these two systems are comparable in their fundamental structure, although, as discussed below, they show some differences.

I take as a point of reference the schema proposed by Wilson (1990: 57) for the English pronominal system (see Table 1).

In this schema the author distinguishes between different referential uses of the same pronoun. 'One' can be used to refer to the speaker or to express indefinite reference, meaning 'somebody'. 'You' can refer to the addressee (s) (You1), to the speaker (You2) or can be used indefinitely (You3).

A corresponding schema would appear in Mexican Spanish as shown in Table 2.

I am not proposing a new taxonomy for Mexican Spanish given the space limitations of this paper, but it is important to stress that a complete account of pronominal reference in Spanish (but also in English) would need a much more elaborated discussion. With regards to the English

Table 1. *Pronominal distribution in English*^a

	1st person	2nd person	3rd person
Singular	I One2 You2	You1	He, She, It One (indefinite) You3 (indefinite)
Plural	We	You	They Those

^a From Wilson (1990).

Table 2. *Pronominal distribution in Spanish^a*

	1st person	2nd person	3rd person
Singular	<i>Yo</i>	<i>Tu1</i>	<i>El, Ella, Ese, Este</i>
	<i>Uno2</i>	<i>Usted</i>	<i>Uno (indefinite)</i>
	<i>Tu2</i>		<i>Tu3 (indefinite)</i>
			<i>Se (indefinite)</i>
Plural	<i>Nosotros</i>	<i>Ustedes</i>	<i>Ellos, Ellas,</i>
			<i>Esos, Esas</i>
			<i>Estos, Estas</i>

system, for example, it is not clear why Wilson includes ‘those’, but not ‘that’ or ‘these’ in his schema. On the other hand, there is no simple equivalence between the use of demonstratives in the two languages. Moreover, as Wilson acknowledges (1990: 58), reference to self or others can be achieved in discourse through the use of possessive pronouns, like ‘my’, ‘mine’, ‘our’, ‘ours’, ‘your’, etc; Therefore a taxonomy of items that can realize personal reference in English cannot be limited to personal pronouns but should include other types of pronouns.

The same can be said for Spanish, although in this language matters are even more complicated than in English. In fact a taxonomy of pronouns encoding personal reference should include the pronoun *se*, which can be compared to ‘one’ in English and to *on* in French. *Se* is often used as an indefinite in agentless passive constructions, but in context it can refer to different persons, exactly like ‘one’ in English or *on* in French which can lose in discourse their indefinite nature and become substitutes for other personal pronouns.¹

Another important fact about Spanish is that in this language personal pronouns are not necessarily expressed in sentences. Sentences in Spanish often have zero subjects, that is their grammatical subject can be omitted. An example of this phenomenon is the following, taken from the speech delivered by José Juárez (lines 7–8):

- (1) *La primera pregunta que O nos hacíamos...*
 ‘The first question that (we) asked ourselves...’

Here, the fact that the grammatical subject is *nosotros* (‘we’) can be deduced from the reflexive *nos* (‘ourselves’) plus the verb morphology, given that the first person plural pronoun is omitted. This phenomenon implies that an analysis of personal reference in actual discourse must take into account not only personal pronouns, but also non subject forms like *me*, *nos*, *los*, *les* (‘me’, ‘us’, ‘them’, etc. in English) and possessive and reflexive or reciprocal pronouns, given that all these forms can be

syntactically and semantically related to personal pronouns. In addition, in Spanish, in the absence of any other indication of personal reference, it is necessary to resort to verb morphology.

For all the reasons discussed above, in this paper although I used Wilson's schema as a point of reference, I also included in the analysis for both English and Spanish possessive pronouns and non subject pronominal forms, and for Spanish I also counted verbal morphological markers, given that all these forms are syntactically and semantically tied to personal pronouns and can express person deixis. Morphological marking was only considered in the absence of other indicators of person reference.

The pronoun *se* was counted when it was used in agentless passive constructions, as in:

- (2) *Se han ido construyendo también alternativas para nuestra integración decorosa en el mercado.* (lines 22–23)
'Alternative programs have also been created for our dignified integration in the market.'

It was also counted as a reflexive when no full subject was expressed or when the reflexive pronoun could have been non co-referential with the subject. For example reflexive *se* was counted in:

- (3) *Ya basta de la borrachera en la que se han metido los ciudadanos.* (lines 75–76)
'Enough of the state of drunkenness in which the people of the city have fallen'

where in Spanish the pronoun *nos* would have been acceptable instead of *se*:

- (4) *Ya basta de la borrachera en la que nos hemos metido los ciudadanos.*

But it was not counted in:

- (5) *nuestras organizaciones se han encontrado en fuego cruzado* (lines 36–37)
'our organizations have found themselves in a cross fire.'

because the subject is fully expressed by the Noun Phrase and *se* is necessarily coreferential with it.

The phenomena that were taken into account in the analysis of pronouns in connection with the expression of identity and involvement were the following:

- (a) presence or absence of the different pronominal forms;
- (b) number of occurrences of each pronoun;

- (c) consistency of reference of each pronoun;
- (d) textual environments of the pronouns such as predicates associated with it and relations established with other pronouns or noun phrases.

2.2. *Data: The speeches and the social event*

The two speeches under analysis were pronounced during a conference organized in Washington D.C. on February 4, 1994, by three American Academic Institutions with the objective of analyzing and discussing a recent Indian revolt in the Mexican State of Chiapas. The event was called: 'Chiapas: Mexican Perspectives', and the question presented in the handout distributed during the discussion was: 'Why Chiapas?'.

The Conference was organized after Mexico had been shaken by a peasant armed revolt in the Southern state of Chiapas, during which the rebels had taken by the arms one of the most important cities in the state and, among other actions, had kidnapped one of the former governors. The demands of the rebels included requests of a fairer distribution of lands, of political democracy in the state and the nation and of government intervention to alleviate the extreme poverty of the region. While the conference was being held, no solution had been found to the conflict and at the moment when I am writing the confrontation between the rebels in Chiapas and the Mexican State has not been resolved.

It is important to say that the speeches were not read although they were probably pre-written in part or totally. They were transcribed from a recording of the conference. This explains the fact that the transcription is sometimes difficult to follow, in fact these speeches show the characteristics of a relatively spontaneous register in that there are pauses, false starts, repetitions and incomplete utterances. This is particularly true of Cordera's speech. It is also important to stress that although Cordera spoke in English, his mother tongue is Spanish.

Speakers were Mexican politicians and academics and American academics. In the audience there were academics, representatives of the international financial organizations, and journalists of both nationalities. Speakers were organized in panels and allowed to speak for five minutes each. After all speakers had delivered their speeches there was a debate.

These contextual characteristics of the speech event allow us to describe the possible political referents that could have been evoked in the discourse universe of each speaker. These potential referents were the Mexican government, the American government, the people of Mexico, the people of America, different political and social groups among the

Mexican or American people, the speakers themselves as individuals, the audience as a whole or the audience as national subgroups.

3. Analysis

3.1. *The speech of José Juárez*

I will first analyze the speech delivered in Spanish by José Juárez, advisor to the Unión de Ejidos² de la Selva, an organism formed by Indian peasant organizations. The transcript of this speech and of Cordera's speech appears in the Appendix and reference to the text is given through line numbering.

As shown in Table 3, there are approximately 839 words in the speech. The instances of personal reference (including morphological marking) in the text are 49, so 5.8 per cent of the words are personal pronouns or other linguistic items encoding personal reference. There are altogether 33 instances of personal reference involving the pronoun *nosotros*, either through verb morphology or through the object pronoun or through the possessive. There are 11 instances of reference with the pronoun *se*, 7 of which are also substitutions for the same pronoun as will be shown below. There are 4 occurrences of pronominal reference implying the pronoun *ellos* 'they/them' and 1 reference to *ella*, through the possessive *sus* 'her'. It is clear that the *nosotros* form is directly or indirectly domina-

Table 3. *Pronimal distribution, José Juárez*

Pronouns	Number
<i>Nosotros</i>	
a) Verb morphology	17
b) Object pronoun <i>nos</i>	7
c) Possessive <i>nuestro</i>	9
Total	33
<i>Se</i>	11
<i>Ellos</i>	
a) Verb morphology	2
b) Object pronoun <i>los</i>	2
Total	4
<i>Ella</i>	
a) Possessive <i>sus</i>	1
Total pronominal forms	49
Total words (approx.)	839

ting this speech. It is also important to stress that there are no occurrences of the pronoun 'I' and that self-reference is therefore always realized through the form *nosotros*. But the pronoun has no obvious referent and could relate the speaker to the different agents identified at the beginning of this analysis.

3.2. *Reference to self: nosotros and se*

Resolution of the pronominal reference is a pragmatic process which the hearer has to perform taking into account various elements of the context. In this case the very first instance of *nosotros* in the text is in line 2:

- (6) *no fue para nuestras comunidades una sorpresa lo sucedido en Chiapas*
'for our communities what happened in Chiapas was no surprise'

There is no overt referent for the pronoun, so it is necessary to resort to both textual and extratextual information to resolve the reference. In this case, extratextual knowledge includes the fact that José Juárez is identified as an advisor to peasant organizations and textual information points at the reference to some kind of community, so the hypothesis can be put forward that the possessive *nuestras* implies the existence of a 'we', whose referent are Indian peasant organizations. The hypothesis that Juárez is talking of peasant organizations is later confirmed. In fact the next instances of the possessive are in similar environments:

- (7) *La primera pregunta que nos hacíamos era sobre la viabilidad de nuestras organizaciones, de nuestras comunidades y de nuestra existencia misma en la zona.* (lines 7–9)
'The first question that we were asking ourselves was about the feasibility of *our* organizations, of *our* communities and of *our* existence itself in the area.'

A similar process of identification can be established for the markers of pronominal reference in verbal morphology. In fact, Juárez gives a reason for the fact that he and the members of the peasant communities were not surprised by the Chiapas uprising. He says that Indian organizations had been working in the area for years and that they knew how conflictive the situation was. In this part of the speech he often uses expressions like:

- (8) *O hemos construido una nueva sociedad* (lines 13–14)
'(we) have built a new society'
(9) *O hemos ido palautinamente reconstruyendo un nuevo modelo productivo* (lines 16–17)
'(we) have been rebuilding little by little a new model of production.'

These examples confirm that the underlying 'we' has the same referent, that is the Indian communities. And in fact in 15 out of the 17 instances of 'we' pronominal reference encoded in verbal morphology, the pronoun *nosotros* can be seen as identifying the peasant organizations.

Reference with the object pronoun *nos*, is construed in the same way in 6 out of the seven cases where it appears in the text as can be seen in (7), where *nos* is coreferential with *nuestras organizaciones*. As it is apparent in this case, the referent of the underlying 'we' has to be pragmatically assigned at the beginning of the text, but subsequently most instances of pronominal reference implying *nosotros* can be assigned to the same political actor, because the context is clearly assessed through repetition and reiteration.

Similarly, it is possible to assert that the same context conditions assignment of a referent to the pronoun *se* which also appears in the text. Lexical repetition allows us to treat the pronoun *se*, which is sometimes used to encode indefinite reference, as a substitute for *nosotros* with the same referent at least in 7 of its 11 instances of appearance. This equivalence can be shown by the context of appearance of the two pronouns. In fact for example we read in lines 19–24:

- (10) *hemos ido construyendo, en la medida de nuestras posibilidades una infraestructura, para el bienestar social, que no existía, se han ido construyendo también alternativas para nuestra integración decorosa en el mercado. Ejemplar ha sido la construcción que se ha hecho...*

'(we) have been building, according to our possibilities, an infrastructure, for social welfare, that did not exist, alternatives have also been created for our decorous integration in the market. The construction that has been done has been exemplary...'

The context for the *nosotros* reference in this passage is the same as that for the *se* reference, and is established by repetition of the same action, that of building a new social reality, therefore *se* can be treated as a variant of *nosotros* in this context. The reason for the use of the indefinite pronoun is very likely the necessity of avoiding repetition.

There is one occurrence of *se*, where the pronoun picks as referents the people speaking at the conference:

- (11) *quizàs eso sea una de las causas màs importantes, màs allà de la pobreza, mas allà de todo lo que se ha mencionado. (lines 41–42)*
'may be this is one of the more important causes, more important than the poverty, more important than all that has been mentioned.'

Here the pronoun implicitly refers to the participants in the conference but without uniquely identifying any of them.

The other occurrences of this pronoun are instances of impersonal *se* in agentless passive constructions with indefinite referents. For example:

- (12) *Se tiene que dar una solución política que necesariamente va a ser de largo plazo.* (lines 69–71)
 ‘a political solution must be found that necessarily is going to be for the long run.’

In this case it is interesting to notice that use of indefinite reference stresses the fact that Juárez is not taking responsibility for finding a political solution to the Chiapas conflict, but is rather hoping that this solution will come out of the debate among the political forces.

In conclusion, 37 out of the 49 instances of personal reference which appear in the text through personal pronouns and other linguistic items (that is, approximately 75 per cent of the whole pronominal reference) point at the Indian communities as the main political actor of this speech and as the group conceived by the speaker as ‘his’ group.

A first conclusion that can be drawn from this is that José Juárez is not only indicating that he is part of these groups but also that he is speaking for them and representing them. In Goffman’s terms, therefore it is possible to say that although José Juárez is himself the *animator* and *author* of the speech, he is stressing his identity as a representative of a group by indicating the presence of a *principal* in his words through his pronominal choice. The *principal* of the speech is systematically identified with the Indian communities. In what context does this reference appear? In other words, how is the principal (and in this case also the self) represented?

Reference to the main political actor represented in this speech occurs in the context of a description of the conditions in which the Indian communities live and of the actions that they have undertaken to fight poverty and to build a dialogue with government and non-government institutions. Most of the predicates associated with the *nosotros* reference are action verbs like ‘build’ (lines 13, 14, 20, 22, 26, 34) and ‘rebuild’ (line 17), ‘fight’ or ‘face’ (line 36, line 40) or verbs indicating an active state like ‘be engaged’ in a situation (line 49) or effort (line 57). No verbs of opinion are associated with the *nosotros* referent, and the only verbs assigning mental states to the referent in question in the speech are to ‘ask oneself a question’ (line 8) and to ‘worry’ (lines 35 and 49–50). In other words the self is represented as organically engaged with a group whose main activity is concrete: building a society, creating democracy, fighting against injustice, looking for solutions.

3.3. Reference to others: 'they'

Let us now turn to the text again to see if other political referents appear in it, looking at the presence of the pronoun *ellos* 'they' in the text. As in the case of the pronoun *nosotros*, *ellos* is implicit in different markers of personal reference. The first mention of *ellos* in the speech is accomplished through the reflexive *se* in line 76 referring to the people of the city. Then there are two instances of the object pronouns *los* in line 77, and subsequently the morphological marking *estàn* in line 78. These references all appear together in this part of the speech, which is in fact the conclusion.

After discussing the situation of the peasant communities, the story of their presence in the area and the efforts that are being made at a peace process, José Juárez turns to the possible solutions. He is talking about the necessity of a wide agreement between social groups for democracy. He says:

- (13) *Ya basta de la borrachera en la que se han metido los ciudadanos, que no los conduce a nada, los ha conducido a una resaca peor de la situación en que están, necesitamos transitar a una situación de compromiso y de construcción democrática.* (lines 75–79)
 'enough of the state of drunkenness in which the people of the city have fallen, which does not lead *them* anywhere, it has led *them* to a worse immobility than the one in which *they* are already, (we) need to shift into a situation of compromise and of democratic construction.'

Pronominal reference in this case clearly points at *los ciudadanos*, the people of the city, the intellectuals that have become enthusiastic about the peasant uprising. It is also interesting to notice that the *ellos* reference is construed in opposition to a *nosotros*, which, for the first time in the text, does not refer to the Indian communities, but encompasses the Mexican people, or at least that part of the people genuinely interested in democracy. José Juárez says:

- (14) *La democracia no nos la va a dar el EZLN³ por si mismo, la democracia no se va dar por decreto, la tenemos que construir y la tenemos que construir todos los Mexicanos.* (lines 79–82)
 'It is not the EZLN who is going to give us democracy, democracy will not be given by decree, (we) have to build it and (we) all Mexicans have to build it.'

So here the political referent of the pronoun *nosotros* is the Mexican people, and this is the closing part of the speech and also the first instance in which the Mexican people is mentioned as a whole. This pronominal

choice is, I think, indicative of the fact that Juárez sees an opposition between the interests represented by his group, as part of the wider community of Mexican people, and the interests voiced by the urban intellectuals, who implicitly do not represent the Mexican people.

The pronominal opposition reveals that *los ciudadanos* are 'they', a political agent with which the speaker does not identify and who have to be reminded about the necessity of a compromise with authorities. What 'they' do, is opposed in the following lines to what 'we' need to do, where 'we' seems to refer to the wide community of Mexican people. In other terms, this pronominal opposition reflects the contrast between particular group behaviors and general interests.

The only other third-person pronoun in the speech is the possessive *sus* in line 62 *sus políticas* 'its policies' and it refers to the Federación de Campesinos, a peasant organization controlled by the PRI, the government party, but there is no further mention of this agent in the speech, so that it is possible to conclude that this actor is not a significant interlocutor or adversary, although reference through a third-person pronoun clearly indicates that Juárez sees no identification between the group represented by him and official peasant organizations.

3.4. *Preliminary conclusions on pronominal choice in Juárez*

I think that it is now possible to draw some conclusions on the use of pronouns in this speech. As I said before, there is a strong predominance of the direct or implicit use of the pronoun *nosotros* with a very well defined referent: the Indian peasant organizations, and there is a consistent reference to 'they' as the people of the city. This last reference appears in a cluster at the end of the speech and in a context of opposition to the pronoun 'we'. There are no second-person pronouns.

These elements of analysis allow us to say that José Juárez is not speaking as an individual but his words point to a *principal*: the Indian communities that he has come to represent. This group is presented as being engaged in a continuous effort to build a new social reality in the region and therefore has acquired political legitimacy through its own presence in the area of the conflict. At the same time, Juárez indicates that he and his group must not be identified with the urban left and that they are a genuine part of Mexican society, members of the larger community of those Mexicans who are fighting for democracy.

The main goal of the speech seems to be the legitimation of the groups represented by José Juárez as political actors and as a part of Mexican society genuinely interested in democracy. In this sense we can say that the speech is highly solidary, since although José Juárez is physically

pronouncing the speech, and is also presumably its author, he never points at himself as the source of it, but indicates that he is the integral representative of a social group. In fact there is no 'I' in the text, but there is a consistent *nosotros*. The interlocutors of the Indian communities can be identified in the choice of the pronoun 'we' pointing in the conclusion at a new referent as *todos los mexicanos*, but more specifically all the Mexicans involved in the democratic battle. On the other hand, the adversaries, or at least the groups with which Juárez does not identify can be recognized as the intellectuals of the city, defined as 'they' in an oppositional context in the speech.

The absence of second-person pronouns also indicates that there is no explicit appeal to specific groups as addressees of the speech. That is, because there is no direct appeal to addressees, we have to assume that ratified recipients and addressees coincide in this case and that in fact the primary goal of the speech is to define and represent the role of a particular group of Mexicans and not to appeal to other forces. From this absence of specific second-person reference and from the apparent goals of the speaker, it is possible to infer that the speech is addressed to all groups represented in the audience: both American and Mexican intellectuals and representatives of the different political and non-political organizations.

3.5. *Rolando Cordera's speech*

Let us now turn to the second speech, that of Rolando Cordera, an advisor to PRONASOL (Programa Nacional de Solidaridad), the anti-poverty social program created and promoted by the Salinas government. Cordera is also a well-known intellectual in Mexico, an economist and a political journalist. The speech is in English, it has 861 words and instances of pronominal reference in it are 33, that is 3.8 per cent, distributed as shown in Table 4.

As can be seen from Table 4, 18 of them, that is more than half, are instances of the pronoun 'I' (with one instance realized through the possessive adjective 'my'), 10 are occurrences of 'we' (also counting the possessive 'our', which appears twice, and the pronoun 'us'), 2 of the pronoun 'they', 1 of the pronoun 'he' and 2 are instances of the pronoun 'you'.

3.6. *Reference to self: 'I' and 'we'*

Instances of the pronoun 'I' are relatively non problematic with respect to reference. In fact they are self-references and all of them appear in

Table 4. *Pronominal distribution, Rolando Cordera*

Pronouns	Number
<i>I</i>	17
Possessive 'my'	1
<i>We</i>	7
Possessive 'our'	2
Object pronoun 'us'	1
<i>You</i>	2
<i>They</i>	2
<i>He</i>	1
Total pronouns	33
Total words (approx.)	861

expressions like 'I'd say' (line 5), 'I wouldn't agree' (line 14), 'I would like to mention' (lines 35–36), etc. Self reference is, in other terms, always related to the expression of opinion or personal belief.

The 'we' reference is more complex, in fact it brings into the discourse a number of different actors. The first appearance of 'we' is in line 11, where the speaker is mentioning some of the facts explaining the Chiapas revolt and he is talking about a Government plan for Chiapas:

- (15) *we* have to keep this in mind, there was a plan called the Chiapas plan for modernization with equality...

Here the referent of the pronoun is ambiguous. 'We' may include the audience or other panelists, or both. But, again, it is important to take into account the identity of the speaker and the linguistic environment, to assign a referent to this pronoun. Both the fact that the speaker is an economist and the fact that knowledge of this kind of plans cannot be required of non experts, allows us to form the hypothesis that this pronoun may be more specific and basically include the speaker and other economic experts, not all the people present at the conference. On the other hand, given that Cordera obviously remembers the Chiapas plan, use of an inclusive 'we' could be considered as an instance of empathetic use, almost a polite form.

A second instance of 'we' appears in line 21, where Cordera is discussing an opinion about the NAFTA treaty as presented by another speaker. He does not agree with the characterization of NAFTA as a treaty against the people:

- (16) ...not only NAFTA against the Indians, but NAFTA against the people and not only the Mexican people, but all Latin

Americans. ...The market, of course is at the center of the whole explanation of the thing but *we* don't have an alternative to the market (lines 16–21)

Here 'we' is used ambiguously because the pronoun could refer to the Mexican people, but also to the Latin American people.

The next occurrence of the pronoun is in line 31 where Cordera is defending his idea that political development and reform should accompany economic development:

- (17) *we* have not been able to assume political development as the central reality for Mexico.

And then again in line 33, where the same concept is repeated but with a more explicit reference:

- (18) but *we* mexicans have not been able to assume completely this reality...

In both cases the pronoun appears to be referring to the Mexican people. Again, our knowledge of the identity of the speaker allows us to form the hypothesis that within the larger community of the Mexican people, the speaker is selecting as a more specific referent for the pronoun, those Mexicans who are capable of political and economic analysis: the intellectuals. In fact the predicates which are related to the use of 'we' represent in this case assumptions and interpretations of Mexican political reality. Similar considerations can be made for the occurrence of 'we' in line 41, where the speaker says:

- (19) *we* are also learning from Chiapas that even the best social policy goes into *desperdicio*, into waste, when social and power structures are not taken into account.

Again this 'we' may include all Mexicans who are suffering the consequences of a certain economic policy, but it can also refer to 'the experts', those who can judge the effects of social and economic policy.

The next occurrence of 'we' (line 47) is in a different context and will be discussed in connection with the 'they' reference below. There is another reference constructed around the pronoun 'we' in line 50:

- (20) let *us* not forget that this government was the hero of the social policy experts getting together...

where again the reminder could be addressed to the audience and the panelists or specifically to the experts, as in line 11.

Further occurrences of the pronominal reference 'we' are found in line 65. The context of these occurrences defines again the referent of the

pronoun as the Mexican people. In fact the speaker is mentioning the problems arising from what he calls 'our' mentality, namely:

- (21) First what *we* have discovered is that *our* democratic consensus is very fragile.

This fragility is due, according to Cordera, to the fact that intellectuals, media representatives and politicians changed side in favor of the zapatistas, thus breaking the democratic consensus. This referent is more precisely defined later in the speech when Cordera takes up the words pronounced by José Juárez:

- (22) But the problem is...*I'd* say that *we* are victims of, as José Juárez said, a *borrachera citadina*, an urban *borrachera* [drunkenness], which, in the case of Chiapas, spread a sort of fever of interpreters. (lines 70–73)

In this passage the 'we' is focusing again specifically on the urban Mexican intellectuals and politicians who have been emotionally involved with the Zapatistas. This referent is in some ways intertextually built by Cordera through the quotation of the words used by Juárez. The use of the pronoun 'we' stresses the fact that the speaker considers himself as a member of this group.

3.7. Reference to others: 'they', 'you' and 'he'

In line 47 Cordera is using 'we' in relation to 'they'. In this part of the text, the speaker is identifying with participants in the first 'Solidarity mission', a mission of government experts.

- (23) By the way, in the first solidarity mission *we* had an international meeting in San Cristobal de las Casas.

This is the first instance of 'we' where the speaker makes an overt reference to his role as an advisor to the government, and in fact it is interesting that this instance of 'we' appears in the same context with a 'they', which is represented by the foreign experts present at the same meeting. The speaker says:

- (24) ...*they* were really impressed, *they* were all impressed by this government, let's not forget that this government also was the hero of the social policy experts getting together, not of the Mexicans by the way. (lines 49–52)

There is an interesting contrast between the 'we' (Mexican experts) and the 'they' (non-Mexican experts) where the speaker seems to be

stressing the difference in judgement about the government's social policy between Mexicans and non-Mexicans. So use of the pronoun 'they' can be seen as encoding this contrast between Mexicans and non-Mexicans. But it is also interesting to notice that such opposition does not necessarily imply that Cordera is 'taking sides' in favor of the Mexican experts. In fact, given that in this part of the speech he is identifying with the government, the contrast could be a rhetoric device to stress the fact that foreigners had a clearer view than Mexicans on the social policy enacted by the government. This hypothesis would be confirmed by the absence of personal reference in the utterance completion: 'not by *the Mexicans* by the way', where there is no 'we' identification with the Mexicans.

Other pronominal references in the text are: 'he', in line 15 and 'you', twice, in lines 38–39. The third-person pronoun refers to another participant in the debate, whose opinion on the effects of the NAFTA Treaty Cordera wants to dispute, and who becomes for a moment the ratified addressee of the words. Cordera mitigates the disagreement by using the expression 'my dear friend Xavier' (line 15).

The pronominal 'you', on the other hand, occurs when Cordera is talking about the fact that social policy is not sufficient to fight a decision to go into the military ground. The speaker says:

- (25) *You* cannot solve this question, *you* cannot have social policy to solve this question (lines 38–39)

The context here seems to indicate that 'you' is used as an indefinite (a You3 in Wilson's schema), since it is apparent that it is not addressing the audience.

The pronoun 'it' is used in the speech three times, but it has not been taken into account because it does not encode personal reference in this case.

3.8. *Comparison of the two speeches*

Summarizing: there are interesting differences in the use of pronouns in the two speeches examined. A comparison can be seen on Table 5.

First, Cordera uses pronominal reference less than José Juárez, although this difference could be partly due to the lack of parallelism in the language systems compared. Second, and most importantly, we saw that self referencing in Juárez's speech was done exclusively through the pronoun *nosotros*. The referent of *nosotros* was in his speech mostly and consistently identified with the Indian communities in Chiapas, while it selected the Mexican People as a referent only in a 'tactical' opposition with the urban intellectuals. The group presented as including the self is

Table 5. *Pronoun distribution in Juárez and Cordera*

Pronouns	Juárez (Spanish)		Cordera (English)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1st singular			18	55%
1st plural	33	67%	10	30%
2nd singular			2	6%
3rd impersonal (<i>se</i>)	11	22%	NA	NA
3rd singular m/f	1	2%	1	3%
3rd plural	4	8%	2	6%
Total pronouns	49		33	
Total words	839		861	

NA = not applicable.

characterized mainly as an active agent involved in the construction of democracy and in the bringing about of social change in Chiapas and in Mexico in general. Other referencing is realized in a context of opposition with self, and brings into the discourse world the urban intellectuals who are negatively represented as victims of a state of drunkenness. There is no self-identification in the speech with any of the interactants which are present at the conference, in fact the only reference to panelists is done through the indefinite *se* (line 42), which indicates the distance put by Juárez between him and the intellectuals and institutional representatives participating in the conference.

In the speech of Cordera, self-referencing is realized mostly with the pronoun ‘I’. The self is mainly represented as somebody who thinks and gives opinions. This indicates that Cordera is basically offering an interpretation of the Chiapas revolt. He sees it as the offspring of a certain type of policy and as a warning sign for Mexicans against democratic immaturity and the dangers involved in breaking the democratic consensus.

The pronoun expressing self-reference which comes second in frequency is ‘we’, but with more ambiguous readings. We saw that this ‘we’ can include the economic experts involved in the Solidarity Program, the Latin American People, the Mexican People in general, or more specifically, Mexican economists or Mexican intellectuals or, more broadly, members of the Mexican urban culture. ‘We’ seems also to refer to the experts participating in the panel, with whom Cordera shows, as opposed to Juárez, a certain degree of identification. Reference to others points at foreign experts as opposed to Mexican experts, although, it is not clear that the opposition is used by Cordera to identify himself with the

Mexican experts. We can therefore conclude that Cordera speaks mainly as an individual, he does not appear to present himself 'organically' as a member of any group, his speech does not consistently imply the presence of a *principal* while it identifies him fully as the author of his words, thus pointing at the dimension of authorship as the most important one in the text.

Cordera does mention the political agents with which he identifies and who could be potential *principals*: the Mexican people, the Mexican intellectuals and specifically the members of the urban intellectual groups, but this identification appears to be tactic, not organic since it is often counterbalanced by frequent use of the pronoun 'I', especially, as we saw, co-occurring with verbs of belief and opinion, and by the use of non-pronominal references to the same agent, where no identification is implied. For example in lines 34–35:

(26) Chiapas is a moment of reflexion for *Mexicans*

not 'for *us*, or in lines 51–52:

(27) ...this Government also was the hero of the social policy experts getting together, not of the *Mexicans*, by the way...

or again in line 28–29:

(28) A general implication is for *Mexicans* and I would say for Americans and the international community of trade....

His identification with the urban intellectuals is also counterbalanced and limited by his criticism of their political behavior which often cooccurs with the use of the 'we' reference.

Cordera also presents himself as a member of the group of economic experts involved in the Solidarity program, but does so only once in the speech, which seems to indicate that he does not view himself as a representative of the group sustaining the program.

There are no second-person pronouns selecting specific referents, which (as in the case of José Juárez) leads to the conclusion that there is no overt appeal to the audience. The addressees of the speech can only be defined based on speaker's intention. If the speaker intention is, as it seems to be, to offer an interpretation of the facts as given by an economic expert and to oppose other interpretations, then the most likely addressees of the speech are the Mexican and American experts present in the audience, more than the recipients in general. The absence of any direct appeal to the audience is, I think, an indication of the fact that, like the one pronounced by José Juárez, it is not designed to involve or request

action of the audience, but rather to express the speaker's evaluation of the situation in Chiapas.

Looking at pronominal usage as an indicator of involvement then, we can conclude that both Cordera and Juárez are expressing high involvement with the topic and the situation discussed, given that both their speeches are strongly personalized. Cordera is also expressing high commitment with the words that he is pronouncing and is therefore stressing the dimension of authorship as the most relevant in his speech, but he is not expressing consistent involvement with any group or individual referred to. His speech is not solidary like the one given by José Juárez. In fact there is no *principal* in the speech and even use of a solidary pronoun like 'we' is always limited. On the other hand there are no clear 'adversaries' in this speech given the limited and in a sense ambiguous use of the pronoun 'they'.

The most stable personal reference is to self. This pronominal choice seems to indicate that the speaker's objective is not that of trying to legitimate or even support any group, but rather to present an evaluation of the facts and to support such an evaluation via his presentation of self as an 'expert'. In this sense, although Cordera is conveying that being a Mexican is part of his identity, the main stress of the speech is on his ability to analyze the conflict and to see solutions as an outsider.

In contrast, the speech delivered by Juárez is lower on a scale of personal involvement with the words pronounced, given that there is no use of the first-person pronoun, but it expresses a high level of solidarity and identification with a particular political agent: namely the Indian communities. His evaluation of the Chiapas conflict is given legitimacy through his identification with a community which has been engaged for a long time in the democratic battle within the region and his position as an individual is not that of an analyst, but more that of an active participant.

4. Conclusions

In this paper I have tried to show how an analysis of pronominal reference in political discourse can help define the way a speaker presents himself as an agent in a particular conflict and the way he relates to others.

I have used Goffman's concept of participation framework in order to show how pronominal selection can be tied to the identification of addressees and sources of a speech and specifically I have argued that the notion of speaker involvement should be re-analyzed distinguishing personal participation in a topic, commitment to one's words and identi-

fication or solidarity with others. I have used Goffman's notions of *author* and *principal* of a speech to distinguish these different kinds of speaker involvement.

I have also shown how pronominal selections not only reflect different choices as to involvement and identification, but also different objectives and purposes in political speeches. I have gone through a detailed analysis of most instances of personal reference in the two texts examined in order to show how consistency or ambiguity of reference can have very different effects on the way the speaker presents himself. I have also tried to show how textual connections and oppositions between different pronominal forms and between pronominal and non pronominal forms must be carefully considered in order to support certain conclusions about meanings that appear to be conveyed by speakers through selections at the level of person deixis.

The analysis has also shown that pronominal choice must be considered as a whole in a text looking at such variables as number of times the same pronouns is used and consistency of reference in order to understand its contribution to the meanings and objectives conveyed by speakers.

In the context of a conflict like the one that is still developing in Chiapas, this kind of analysis can reveal some of the perceptions of the situation that political actors have and, if extended to a wider corpus, it can give grounds to new interpretations of the conflict itself.

Appendix: Transcripts of the speeches

José Juárez—Advisor to Unión de Ejidos de la Selva

- 1 En este marco que señalaba Javier, de los antecedentes, no fue para
- 2 nuestras comunidades una sorpresa lo sucedido el día primero.
- 3 Existe una larga historia de confrontación, de propuestas, de lucha
- 4 política, de lucha ideológica en el seno de las organizaciones, las
- 5 cuales en los últimos meses, en el último año ha sido muy cruel,
- 6 muy ... ha sido extremadamente violenta. Se vive un ambiente
- 7 desgarrador en las comunidades de la selva. La primera pregunta
- 8 que nos hacíamos era sobre la viabilidad de nuestras organizaciones,
- 9 de nuestras comunidades y de nuestra existencia misma en la zona.
- 10 Muchos años, 20–30 años de trabajo continuo, de construir un
- 11 nuevo espacio social en la selva. 20 años atrás, más de 20 años
- 12 atrás no existía nada en la selva, era el desierto de la soledad. En
- 13 estos 30, 20 años hemos construido una nueva cultura, hemos
- 14 construido una nueva sociedad, una nueva sociedad en donde hemos

15 exigido y practicado día con día la democracia, la democracia de
16 nuestro espacio comunitario, donde hemos ido palautinamente
17 reconstruyendo un nuevo modelo productivo, con diferentes métodos,
18 hemos sido los principales encauzadores y defensores de los
19 recursos naturales, con propuestas, con alternativas, hemos ido
20 construyendo en la medida de nuestras posibilidades una
21 infraestructura, una infraestructura para el bienestar social, que no
22 existía, se han ido construyendo también alternativas para nuestra
23 integración decorosa en el mercado. Ejemplar ha sido la construcción
24 que se ha hecho, incluso empresas del extranjero, en Europa,
25 en Estados Unidos [...] para articular y retener de alguna manera
26 los excedentes que hemos producido. En fin, se ha ido construyendo
27 una sociedad. Una sociedad que parte de las necesidad, que nos
28 lanzamos a ella de la necesidad de libertad, de tierra para trabajar
29 y sobre todo de dignidad que no existía en las fincas cafetaleras, en
30 las fincas de madera de donde provienen la mayor parte de los
31 miembros de las comunidades de hoy. Una parte importante también
32 han sido los excedentes de las comunidades viejas que están
33 en torno a Comitán, en torno a San Cristobal, en torno a [...]. Se
34 ha ido construyendo se ha ido acoplando una nueva vida.

35 Nos preocupaba mucho esto y nos sigue preocupando, es decir
36 desde el primero de enero, es una lucha que tenemos las ... nuestras
37 organizaciones se han encontrado en fuego cruzado. Por una lado
38 el anquilosamiento, las dificultades de la búsqueda de lograr una
39 verdadera interlocución política con las instituciones gubernamentales,
40 nos enfrentamos a un autoritarismo en extremo violento,
41 quizás eso sea una de la causas más importantes, más allá de la
42 pobreza, más allá de todo lo que se ha mencionado. Y es importante
43 la cuestión del racismo y sobre todo el autoritarismo. Motiva más
44 que la pobreza, más incluso que la desesperanza, no por estar
45 pobres, sino por no ver perspectivas para el cambio a ser pobre.

46 El toque del autoritarismo es fundamental, el autoritarismo que
47 encontramos en la esquina, el autoritarismo que encontramos en
48 nuestros transportes al vender el café, al vender el ganado. En este,
49 en este escenario en el cuadro que desenvolvemos hoy nos preocupan
50 tres o vislumbramos tres o cuatro puntos centrales para salir
51 adelante: el primero es dar una batalla para garantizar la existencia
52 de las organizaciones sociales como interlocutores válidos entre las
53 comunidades, la sociedad y el estado. Esto no puede ser solamente
54 en el ámbito restringido de la zona del conflicto. Debe ser un
55 movimiento mucho más amplio. El esfuerzo que se está haciendo
56 para lograr esta convergencia de organizaciones sociales en Chiapas

57 es sumamente importante. Estamos empeñados en ese esfuerzo,
58 debe de continuar, es garantía para la existencia de nuestras organi-
59 zaciones. Un segundo punto, un segundo elemento es la necesidad
60 urgente e impostergable de cambiar las estructuras autoritarias de
61 poder. Es fundamental, no es posible las disculpas de la Federación
62 de no poder materializar sus políticas por los impedimentos de los
63 cacicazgos locales o los impedimentos del gobierno estatal. Eso
64 tiene que romperse. No podemos seguir con estas estructuras de
65 poder, no alianzas entre los caciques y el estado o las autoridades
66 estatales, estas alianzas nocivas no pueden seguir adelante, tiene
67 que haber una transformación inmediata.

68 Sí, gracias. Un tercer elemento es la necesidad de la solución
69 política al conflicto. El conflicto está, está la fuerza expresada, se
70 tiene que dar una solución política que necesariamente va a ser de
71 largo plazo, pero tiene que ser política, tiene que ser con la participa-
72 ción de todos y el reconocimiento de todas las fuerzas que existen
73 en la región. Y finalmente la necesidad de un movimiento social,
74 amplio, articulado y propositivo. Un compromiso verdaderamente
75 contundente del conjunto de la sociedad por la democracia. Ya
76 basta de la borrachera en la que se han metido los ciudadanos, que
77 no los conduce a nada, los ha conducido a una resaca peor de la
78 situación en que están, necesitamos transitar a una situación de
79 compromiso y de construcción democrática. La democracia no nos
80 la va a dar el EFZL por sí mismo, la democracia no se va a dar
81 por decreto, la tenemos que construir y la tenemos que construir
82 todos los mexicanos.

Translation

'Within this frame that was pointed out by Javier, of the antecedents, what happened on January 1st was not a surprise for our communities. A long history of confrontation exists, of proposals, of political fight, of ideological fight within the organizations, which, in the last months, in the last year, has been very cruel, very ... has been extremely violent. The political climate in which the communities of the jungle live is conflictive. The first question that we were asking ourselves was about the feasibility of our organizations, of our communities, of our existence itself in the area. Many years, maybe 20 or 30 years of continuous work, of building a new social space in the jungle. 20 years ago, more than 20 years ago there was nothing in the jungle, it was the desert of loneliness. In these 30, 20 years we have built a new culture, we have built a new

society, a new society in which we have demanded and practiced day after day democracy, the democracy of our community space, where we have been building little by little a new model of production, with different methods, we have been the main promoters and defenders of natural resources, with proposals, with alternatives, we have been building, within our possibilities, an infrastructure, an infrastructure for social welfare, that did not exist, alternative programs have also been created for our dignified integration in the market. There has been a model construction which has been made, even foreign enterprises, in Europe, in the USA [...] to articulate and retain the surplus that we produced. Summarizing, a new society has been built. A society starting from the need, that we started from the need for freedom, for land to work on and particularly for dignity which did not exist in the coffee plantations, in the wood plantations from which the majority of the members of the communities of today come. Also an important part has come from the surplus in the old communities which are around Comitán, around San Cristóbal, around [...]. A new life has been created and shaped.

This worried us and is still worrying us, that is since January the first, we have this fight, our organizations have been between cross fire. On the one side the rigidity, the difficulties in the attempt of obtaining a real political exchange with the government institutions, we have to face an extremely violent authoritarianism, maybe this is one of the main causes, more than poverty, more than all that has been mentioned. And the question of the authoritarianism is important. It has consequences more than poverty, even more than desperation, not about being poor but because one cannot see a perspective of change.

The question of authoritarianism is very important, the authoritarianism that we find in every corner, the authoritarianism that we find in our means of transportation, when we sell coffee, when we sell cattle. In this, in this scenario, in the frame that we are developing today, we are worried by or we can see three or four main points to go on: the first is to fight in order to guarantee the existence of the social organizations as valid interlocutors between the communities, society and the state. This cannot only happen within the restricted boundary of the conflict area. It must be a much wider movement. The effort that is being made to accomplish this convergence of social organizations in Chiapas is very important. We are involved in this effort, it must go on, it is a guarantee for the existence of our organizations. A second point, a second element is the urgent and not deferrable need to change the authoritarian power structures. It is fundamental, it is not possible the excuses of the Federation that they are not able to materialize their policies because of the obstacles put forward by the local chiefs or by the federal government. This has

to be broken. We cannot go on with these power structures, no alliances between the local chiefs and the state or the authorities of the state, these harmful alliances cannot go on, an immediate transformation must take place.

Yes thanks. A third element is the need for a political solution to the conflict. The conflict is there, the force has expressed itself, a political solution must come out that is necessarily going to be a long term one, but it must be political, it must come with the participation of everybody and the recognition of all the forces existing in the region. And finally the need for a comprehensive, articulated movement that proposes solutions. A really strong commitment of the whole society for democracy. Enough of the state of drunkenness in which the people from the city have fallen, that does not lead them anywhere, has led them to a worse immobility than the situation in which they are, we need to move towards a situation of democratic commitment and construction. The EZLN alone is not going to give us democracy, democracy is not going to be given to us by decree, we have to build it and all Mexicans must build it.'

*Rolando Cordera—advisor to PRONASOL*⁴

1 I would like to address some of the implications of the Chiapas
2 uprising, which is the main topic of this panel, in a more general
3 way. First of all I'd like to make a general proposition trying to
4 address some of the issues which have been raised in this panel and
5 the panel before. As Lourdes suggested I'd say that in a [...] fashion,
6 Chiapas is a tragedy of modern development, a tragedy of modern-
7 ization, it's not the expression of a lack of power as many have
8 been saying in Mexico. Historically I would like to say also that
9 Chiapas is an upsurge from savage modernization which started in
10 the seventies and got a lot of speed in the eighties when the Chiapas
11 plan was combined with recession and we have to keep this in
12 mind, there *was* a plan called the Chiapas plan for modernization
13 with equality, at least at the level of target and the savage modern-
14 ization caused anxiety before globalization, but I wouldn't agree
15 with my dear friend Xavier [...] when he put the problem in a
16 dichotomy between NAFTA against the people, not only NAFTA
17 against the Indians, but NAFTA against the people and not only
18 the Mexican People, but all Latin Americans. I don't think that's
19 a useful way to address the question, which is a relevant question.
20 The market, of course is at the center of the whole explanation of
21 the thing but we don't have an alternative to the market, I'd say
22 that the tragedy of development and modernization and I'm not

23 going against development and modernization, I'm arguing for
 24 reform in policy. The general implication, one of the general impli-
 25 cations of Chiapas is that there is a fundamental set of discontinuity
 26 between the macrolevel and the economic, political and social,
 27 ethical community, where things ... life takes place. A general
 28 implication is for Mexicans and I would say for Americans and the
 29 international community of trade, is that political development in
 30 the global reality of Mexico, this has to be assumed by society as
 31 a whole. We have not been able to assume political development
 32 as the central reality for Mexico, not to say the more macro [...],
 33 but we Mexicans have not been able to assume completely this
 34 reality and Chiapas is a moment of reflection for Mexicans in this
 35 fashion. There is a specific policy implication that I would like to
 36 mention and it is a clear, concrete lesson coming from Chiapas:
 37 that social policy is never sufficient to deactivate a decision, a
 38 strategic decision to go into the political military ground. You
 39 cannot solve this question, you cannot have social policy to solve
 40 this question, it's a question of political reform, state action and
 41 careful policy. But secondly we have also— we are also learning
 42 from Chiapas that even the best social policy goes into *desperdicio*
 43 into waste, when it is not taken into account the concrete social
 44 and power structures where the social policy is being implemented
 45 and this is clear in Chiapas. A lot of people talk about Patrocinio,
 46 I will talk about a lot of other persons. By the way, in the first
 47 solidarity mission we had an international meeting in San Cristobal
 48 de las Casas, a lot of experts, international experts came, all on the
 49 progressive side of the political spectrum, they were really
 50 impressed, they were all impressed by this government, let's not
 51 forget that this Government also was the hero of the social policy
 52 experts getting together, not of the Mexicans by the way.

53 Well I would say that this contradiction between social policy in
 54 general and [...] which I think solidarity is beginning to have a
 55 good social policy again concrete social and power structure was
 56 in Chiapas dominated and overdetermined by what I would call an
 57 interorganization of peasant agreement. Chiapas is probably the
 58 most organized state in Mexico. Really José Juárez and Margarito
 59 and many others said that there is a lot of actual practical organiza-
 60 tions. And then outside this, the deceleration of basic organization
 61 which encounters a very hostile, aggressive power structure is one
 62 partial explanation for the uprising. One political implication is
 63 political reform, etc. But I would like to just mention one of the
 64 political implications which has to do with our mentality. First

65 what we have discovered is that our democratic consensus is very
 66 fragile. Intellectuals, media people, politicians, immediately changed
 67 sides, became absorbed by the impact of the Indians organizing in
 68 an army, forgot about the democratic consensus, created a lot of
 69 confusion in the urban side of Mexican society. This has been
 70 deactivated due to the pact signed by political parties, but the
 71 problem is ... I'd say that we are victims of as José Juárez said, a
 72 *borrachera citadina*, of an urban *borrachera* which, in the case of
 73 Chiapas, spread a sort of fever of interpreters. Everybody is an
 74 interpreter of the Indians, and still the army, the Zapatista army
 75 has not talked completely. In the democratic circle everybody also
 76 is interpreting the Zapatista army, it is a key of an immature urban
 77 culture, mediated also by the lacking active process of democratiza-
 78 tion. Thank you.

Transcription conventions

[...] = could not be deciphered by the transcriber
 – = indicates self interruption
 ... = noticeable pause

Notes

- * I would like to thank Teun A. van Dijk, Deborah Schiffin and Catherine Ball for all the insightful comments that they provided on this paper.
- 1. A very interesting discussion of French *on* can be found in Laberge and Sankoff (1986) and in Mülhusler and Harr (1990).
- 2. The word 'Ejido' refers in Mexican Spanish to communal lands.
- 3. Ejrcito Zapatista de Liberacin Nacional.
- 4. Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (antipoverty national plan).

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