The reconfiguration of the state in an era of neoliberal globalism: State violence and indigenous responses in the Costa Chica-Montaña of Guerrero, Mexico.

Chapter One
The Mexican State and Indigenous Peoples: Toward a Conceptual Framework

The current chapter lays out the conceptual framework for contextualising the relationship between increasing State violence and the emergence of multiple organised indigenous responses in an era of State reconfiguration towards neo-liberalism in Mexico. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section explores how the use of violence for the formation of the Mexican post-revolutionary State has been analysed in contemporary literature. Particularly, it juxtaposes the corporatist approach, which focuses on the "exceptionality" of the Mexican State -something attributed to its efficient institutionalisation system, the incorporation of the most important social sectors, and the minimisation of State violence- with the most recent academic approach that is critical of the corporatist approach and posits that the use of violence in the history of the formation of the post-revolutionary State has not been sufficiently recognised, especially at the local level. This thesis continues the discussion initiated by the critical approach, drawing particularly attention to the wide spectrum of control mechanisms -ranging from hegemonic domination to direct violence- used by the post-revolutionary ruling elite in order to compensate for the disequilibrium caused by the incomplete State formation process, and to maintain the necessary stability for its modernisation project. The final part discusses how the crises of the post-revolutionary State and its control mechanisms in the neo-liberal era are generating new forms of violence that stem from the imminent change of the State model, the new requirements of the global market, and the empowerment of organised indigenous peoples against the imposition of neo-liberal policies.

The second section analyses the different academic approaches that explain the emergence and development of indigenous peoples in Latin America in general, and particularly in Mexico, in the 1990s. The impact of international and domestic factors will be highlighted in order to understand when and why indigenous movements surfaced. Furthermore, this section studies the way in which indigenous movements reinforce their collective identity, actions, engagement with government agents and, in some cases, their confrontation with the State because of the arbitrary implementation of the neoliberal model over their lands, resources and forms of organisations.

These two literatures help to unveil the conventional conception of the monolithic character of the Mexican State, and show the need to create a new analytical framework for a better understanding of its incomplete formation process, which has entered in a profound crisis because of the introduction of the neoliberal project that has been the catalytic element for the increased use of State violence and the emergence of organised indigenous articulations, as will be explored in the following sections.

A) The Covert Side of the Formation of the Post-revolutionary Mexican State

a) The Corporatism Approach

The use of State violence has not been sufficiently acknowledged in the literature about the formation of the post-revolutionary Mexican State. Corporatism[1] has been the predominant

[1] Philippe Schmitter defines corporatism as a system of interest representation in which its constituent units are organised in a limited number of unique categories that are obligatory, non-competitive, hierarchically organised and functionally differentiated, recognised or authorised (if not created) by the State, which are given a representational monopoly, with in their respective categories, in exchange for the observance of

academic approach. It highlights the "exceptionality" of the the Revolutionary Institutional Party's system of incorporation and institutionalisation, which has fostered the social order and political stability needed to build the State and to develop the economic model of industrialisation for many decades. Although it acknowledges that the governing elites used a combination of negotiation and repression strategies, it also recognises that they were skilful in supporting the regime to incorporate the masses while minimising violent repression against any challenging or autonomous opposition.

This idea was supported and complemented by the literature that prevailed in Latin America during the Cold War (1945-1989), which focused on civil-military relationships. Those who supported this approach also stressed the success of the post-revolutionary regime since, in contrast to other Latin American regimes, it attained the subordination and loyalty of the army to the civil power and avoided the possibility of a military coup like the ones that took place in most countries in this region (Ferreyra and Segura 2000:18-9).

Corporatist writers[2] have emphasised the efficacy of PRI in incorporating all relevant sectors, including the opposition, through the use of co-option more than violence. They also suggest that the Mexican State, through its main official party, managed to centralise power and monopolise violence at the national level mainly through the control and professionalisation of the army, and institutional centralisation. All this transformed the PRI into a hegemonic party that limited the development of other political entities or

certain controls in the selection of their leaders and in the articulation of their demands and supports (Schmitter 1979:93-4).

[2] Ruth Collier, José Luis Reyna, Susana Eckstein, Judith Adler Hellmar, and Joe Foweraker, amongst others, are key corporatist authors (Rubin 1994:113-4).

discourses through its clientelistic[3] system and monopolised all the political and social spaces in the country for many decades. In sum, as Ruth Collier, one of the most important representatives of the corporatist approach expressed it, "The Mexican system became a stable, multiclassist, integrating, hegemonic and one-party system". [4]

b) The Critical Approach

A new academic approach has recently emerged questioning the ideas of those who defend the Mexican exceptionality, the success of corporatism and, particularly, the "*Post-revolutionary Pax Priísta*". Some names stand out amongst the most representative authors following this approach: Jeffrey Rubin (1994; 1996), Wil Pansters (1999; 2005), Alan Knight (1999) and Jonathan Fox (1994). [5] They argue that the violence of the State apparatus was decisively utilised by the governing elites in order to repress workers, peasants, indigenous people, students, political opponents and even members of the system who contested the State model, especially at the local level. They mention that "the ugliest side of authoritarianism, violent repression by the State, remained hidden most of the time at least at the level of national politics" (Pansters 1999:239) and thus "it is not acknowledged that national stability coexisted with or depended on violence and repression at the local level (Knight 1999:116).

[3] Clientelism entails a personalised reciprocal relationship that involves economic and political favours from a notable or a politician in exchange of support and personal loyalty (Kourvetaris and Dobratz 1987: 32-33).
[4] Ruth Collier (1982) "Popular sector incorporation and political supremacy: Regime evolution in Brazil and Mexico" in Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Richard Weinert (eds.) Brazil and Mexico: Patterns in late development, Philadelphia, p.77 quoted in Rubin 1994:114.
[5] Some other important authors who belong to this new approach are Armando Bartra (2000, 2004), Peter Guardino (1996), Neil Harvey (1998, 2001), Daniel Nugent (1994), Ian Roxborough (1999), Aida Ferreyra and Renata Segura (2000), John Gledhill (1998), Schoijet, M. and Worthington, R (1993), Gerardo Otero and Horacio Mackinlay (2004), amongst others.

Authors such as John Gledhill even recognise that "the fascination with the PRI State apparatus as an instrument of the 'perfect dictatorship'[6] has distracted our attention for many years from studying the elites that developed and flourished behind the structures of hegemonic practices" (Gledhill 1998:22).

This new approach has caused an interesting debate around why the violent side of the Mexican State has not been recognised, but rather, there has been an emphasis on the high degree of social stability and the relative absence of political violence (Rubin 1994:113).

One explanation could be found in the fact that corporatist authors formulated many of their concepts in relation to authoritarian regimes in the Southern Cone and Central America. They stressed the revolutionary origins of the PRI that was ideologically and formally committed to social reform, popular participation and institutionalisation. Since it did not contravene any political institutions nor the Constitution, the Mexican regime differentiated itself, for instance, from the Guatemalan governing elite that openly encouraged an excluding and racist regime or from the bureaucratic-military authoritarianism that prevailed in the Southern Cone (Knight 1999:117; Pansters 1999:251-4).

In this context, the violence of the Mexican State in comparison with violence in Central America and the Southern Cone seems less extreme and significant, but authors like Alan Knight consider that view as only partially developed or based on false assumptions. He argues that the Mexican State did not need to apply the bureaucratic authoritarianism that was characteristic in the Southern Cone (open violence and repression) because it already

[6] The term "perfect dictatorship" was used by Mario Vargas Llosa in an interview in August 1990 in order to describe the political system established by the PRI. This statement caused him to be expelled from the country since the Mexican law prohibits foreigners to intervene in the national political life.

had its own more discrete authoritarian system: inclusive, civil and institutional but nonetheless authoritarian (Knight 1999:117). This *dictablanda*, as it has also been called by some analysts,[7] prevented the country from enduring civil wars and military coups which other Latin American countries experienced and allowed the regime to maintain a positive image and protect its legitimacy at the national and international levels.

Amongst the most interesting arguments from those who criticise the corporatist approach, there is one related to the idea that violence should not be treated quantitatively. It should not be judged based on the simple decline of incidents of political violence at the national level since there are qualitative elements that should be taken into consideration as part of the analysis. Therefore, it should be acknowledged that even though violence was not exerted in a massive or direct manner in Mexico, it was used in an anonymous, peripheral, long-lasting, quotidian, discrete and selective way and was indirectly exercised through political intermediaries or irregular armed forces. In contrast with other dictatorships, violence in Mexico involved small and local acts of violence and not massive, centralised acts of traditional repression (Amnesty International 1986:145). Furthermore, violence is perpetrated by freelances or specialists (gunmen, *guardias blancas*,[8] *halcones*[9]) more than by the police force or the army. All this has permitted violence to be officially denied, avoided or ignored (Knight 1999:118).

Based on different local case studies, critical authors have demystified the exceptionality of the Mexican regime and its *post-revolutionary pax,* evidencing the use of violence at

[7] *Dictablanda* is a term used to define an imperfect liberal democracy or a relatively democratic system without liberties. Octavio Paz used this tem to refer to the PRI system.
[8] The *guardias blancas* have been defined as the private police of big landowners.
[9] The *halcones* are urban shock groups comprised mainly of suburban youths and used to repress protests in the 1970s in the main urban centres of the country.

different levels, especially the rural areas. For example, they question why corporatist literature hardly mentions that maintaining that coalition required a good amount of threats and real violence even if it is true that a large part of civil society was incorporated into the different PRI sectors (Knight 1999:118). Corporatist authors minimise the fact that the corporative system is related to the authoritarian system that has a centralised and bureaucratic control of organisational functions of the political and electoral system and supports only one recognised ideology, repressing any other political cultures (Mackinlay and Otero 2004:74).

Another challenge that Jeffrey Rubin poses to corporatists is related to their conception of the PRI regime as hegemonic, centralised and expansive. They only recognised small local variations of that kind of regime and did not explore the actions of local resistances that could alter the nature of the State's power. In contrast, Rubin argues that there was a huge regional disparity in the exercise of corporatist power, especially in remote rural areas in Mexico where the PRI did not penetrate until the 1970s.[10] Likewise, other State institutions had an uneven and incomplete penetration into the different regions of the country when implementing governmental policies. Therefore, the government could not guarantee a persuasive control over the majority of the population. This permitted the creation of alternative spaces where independent social movements were formed and contested the State (Rubin 1994:115-7). In some cases, this fostered the emergence of limited political autonomies that discretely survived managing to maintain, in some areas, something that Débora Yashar (2005) calls private identities and Jonathan Fox (1989) calls "democratic

[10] Jeffrey Rubin argues that the PRI and its different sectors did not reach the area of Istmo de Oaxaca until well into the 1970s (Rubin 1994:118).

islands".[11] However, as will be analysed later in this thesis, authoritarian enclaves also emerged, which have been one of the biggest obstacles to the democratisation and modernisation of the State, particularly in the South East of the country.

Following this train of thought, Knight states that even if it is true that at the national level power was relatively centralised in the hands of the president –who had the monopoly of violence and power especially amongst the elites –, at the local level, such centralisation was not homogeneously expressed and State penetration was not complete. In several provinces the national elite even allowed and/or encouraged the use of violence. In this sense, the PRI's actions as well as the actions of the different State agents were not homogenous across the country. In the north of Mexico, for example, a more progressive approach was adopted in some periods as a result of the proximity to the United States and the lack of ethnic tensions. In contrast, in the South of the country, the State selectively intervened or tolerated the autonomous actions of caciques or local political leaders (Knight 1999:107).

It is worth mentioning that an integral part of the violence and political culture in Mexico owes itself to the actions of caciques who have played the role of intermediaries between the State and the rural society (and more recently the market). During the post-revolutionary period, the governing national elite made agreements and alliances with different local caciques, which contributed to the stability and social control of the central regime. In return the caciques were permitted to exert their power in their *patrias chicas* (small homelands), and maintain the monopoly of violence in order to achieve the

[11] This is a term that Rubin took from a conference in 1989, where Jonathan Fox mentioned consensus and accountability spaces in community assemblies in some indigenous communities (Rubin 1994).

accumulation of capital and the elimination of their opponents. In some cases, the caciques created their own private armies for this purposes (Knight 1999:111, 118). It is important to mention that violence has not been the only tool of power used by the caciques. They have also developed non-violent methods such as *compadrazgo* systems,[12] but they have predominantly established clientelistic systems which consist of allocating resources of the national government in exchange for subordination and control (Knight 2005:16).

For many decades, the national government tolerated and even reinforced the existence of local caciques since they were useful as control agents and in electoral mobilisations for the regime (Knight 1999:113). However, the autonomy given to the caciques has become one of the biggest obstacles to the political and economical reforms of the national government as some of them refuse to relinquish their "gained autonomy" (Rubin 1994:120). In some cases, some caciques have used violence to maintain their position (Pansters 1999:254), and because of this many of the centrally promoted governmental policies have failed. This was the case of the Land Reform in some areas of the South East of the country which was difficult to implement due to local resistance (Hernández Navarro 1994). Later on, this document will explore the transformations or hybrid forms that some caciques have adopted in order to survive and adapt to the changing State model in a new political and economical national and international context.[13]

[12] Informal relationships based on nepotisms and friendship networks.

[13] For an excellent analysis of caciques and their transformations, please refer to Pansters, W.G. (2005) Goodbye to the caciques? Definitions, the State and the dynamics of the caciquismo in twentieth-century Mexico. Caciquismo in twentieth-century Mexico A. Knight and W.G. Pansters. London, Institute for the Study of the Americas. There is also an interesting research on the transformation of caciques in Gledhill, John (1998) Neoliberalism and ungovernability: Caciquismo, militarization and popular mobilization in Zedillo´s Mexico. Encuentros antropológicos: Power, identity and mobility in Mexican society. V. Napolitano and X. Leyva. London, Institute of Latin American Studies.

Wil Pansters criticises the corporatist literature and recent theories on political transition[14] for its focus on the institutionalisation of the State, the centralist character of power and the analysis of the formal constitutional legal frame. He argues that they overlook the analysis of informal elements of Mexican politics, particularly the role of non-institutional agents such as the aforementioned caciques, the mega-constitutional power of the executive,[15] the arrangements and agreements between "*camarillas*", loyalty networks, and hidden norms and agendas of the Mexican political praxis, amongst others (Pansters 1999:252).[16]

In sum, this critical approach emphasises the importance of carrying out regional and local research that contributes to decentralising the analysis of the State and its different informal aspects. This will pave the way to questioning the homogeneity of the political culture and demystifying the conception of the State as a monolithic political apparatus at the national level (Fox 1994; Rubin 1996; Fox 2000; Pansters 2005). This approach has been essential to understanding the uneven penetration of the Mexican State in the different regions, which also explains the multiple responses of the State to different social sectors and vice versa.

[14] Wil Pansters argues that recent theories on democratic transition focus on carrying out block changes in the electoral arena, modifying legislations, and the restructuring of corporatism arrangements as necessary measures for such transition, without taking into account the informal character of the political culture in Mexico (Pansters 1999:249).

[15] Metaconstitutional powers confer the president a great discretional power, mainly over the legislative and judiciary.

[16] Recently, the term "factual powers" has been introduced to describe mainly the media, important national business people and foreign investors amongst others (Riva Palacio 2006).

c) The Wide Spectrum of Control Mechanisms of the Mexican State

The new academic critical approach has initiated an important debate about the nature of the post-revolutionary Mexican State and has evidenced its concealed violence, largely at the local level and through informal mechanisms.

However, this research argues that the regime that emerged from the Mexican Revolution reached a process of social legitimisation and political stability using other non-violent control mechanisms, in addition to violence. This contrasts with the corporatism approach – that is focused on the "successful" system of incorporation yet disregards its violent character -, and it complements recent academic approaches that recognise State violence. This research argues that: in Mexico, the national governing elite was able to generate a wide repertoire of formal and informal mechanisms of State control, ranging from those that did not include any violence, such as hegemonic domination,[17] to those that include the direct use of violence in order to compensate the unfinished State formation process and support its modernising project.

The forms and mechanisms of control used by the post-revolutionary regime were so subtle, complex and interrelated to other social and political factors that it becomes necessary to briefly discuss and conceptualise them so that they can be examined in context in the subsequent chapters. The following are some of the most relevant ones.

[17] This concept follows Gramsci's notion of hegemony. Antonio Gramsci (1971) Selection from the Prison Notebooks, New York, International Publishers.

Hegemonic Domination

For many decades, in vast regions of Mexico, the post-revolutionary regime exerted a hegemonic domination over many sectors of the population. That form of State control was not based on coercion or violence but on ideological co-optation of people and groups into the structures of power. This means that State agents did not need to use force to achieve the conformity and collaboration of their citizens but used their ideology to establish the political hegemony of the governing group over the population (Gramsci 1971). In this sense, the post-revolutionary dominating class managed to generate a complex and efficient system of domination based on a nationalist revolutionary ideology (Aguilar-Rivera 1994). Therefore, nationalism was the PRI's instrument of domination and control, with an important legitimising function vis-à-vis the stability and cohesion of the system (Bartra 2007:1999).[18]

It is important to remember that the PRI regime emerged from a social revolution that established one of the most advanced constitutions regarding social rights and, for many decades, generated high expectations amongst the different sectors of society with the promise of justice and equality. This allowed the governing class to indoctrinate and absorb different sectors that accepted the national project of the elite as their own without facing any important resistance. This was achieved through the PRI's control over the national education system, the mass media and the main bureaucratic sectors of the country.

[18] Nationalism was mainly based on the defence of national sovereignty and the *mestizaje* of the population (Bartra 2002:20; Bartra 2007).

Post-revolutionary hegemonic domination worked more efficiently in urban areas than in rural ones since in the cities the transmitters of ideology (official schools, political parties, churches, mass media, governmental agencies and civil associations) worked better. In contrast, in the rural areas, the presence of those transmitters was incomplete and uneven, so it had to be compensated or complemented by other control mechanisms such as coercion and the actions of caciques and local political leaders as is analysed later through the case studies included in this research.

During the years that followed the Revolution, hegemonic domination worked effectively. However, due to the students' massacre in Tlatelolco in 1968, the first signs of the crisis of the system were evidenced amongst new social actors such as the urban middle classes which had neither effectively absorbed nor were necessarily convinced by the system and its nationalist discourse.

Institutional Incorporation

Another control mechanism used by the regime was its incorporation system through which the PRI institutionalised the main political and social forces in the country in order to negotiate and resolve conflicts within the governing party. The climax in the process of institutional incorporation was reached during the government of general Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), who managed to assimilate the most representative social groups into a corporate apparatus of national scope. That way, Mexican corporatism organised the population into three main sectors or social categories towards the end of the 1930s: peasants and indigenous people were put together in the Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC) –National Peasant Confederation- while the urban population tied to the

industrial sector was gathered in the Confederación de Trabajadores de México (CTM) – Mexican Workers Confederation. In 1938, there was even a military sector.[19] Later on, in 1943, the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (CNOP) -National Confederation of Popular Organisations- was created in order to include the urban middle classes that were tied to the service sector and bureaucracy.

This control mechanism was the one that privileged the regime over its political opponents and consisted of integrating leaders of the different social and political movements into the system through clientelistic relationships. They would receive services and goods in order to share them with their support base and followers in exchange for political electoral support to the regime.[20]

The Use of Coercion

The use of coercion as a control mechanism is understood as persuading a person or organisation to unwillingly behave in a specific way through action or inaction. Coercion can include the use of threats, intimidation, blackmail or any form of physical or psychological harm in order to reinforce the credibility of the threat (Schelling 1960).

It is important to stress that coercion does not completely remove the capacity of the victims to decide their own type of reaction nor does it necessarily affect their range of choices. In this sense, coercion is more effective when the victim has no other option

[19] In 1946, Miguel Alemán, the first post-revolutionary civilian president, cut out the military sector (Camp 2005: X).
[20] To better understand clientelist relationships please read Jonathan Fox's (1994) "The difficult transition from clientelism to citizenship: Lessons from Mexico." World Politics.

because the coercive force holds the monopoly of resources. However, even under such conditions there is some room for manoeuvre and the victim can resist or generate some form of autonomy since the threat might not come true. As such, the victim does not necessarily run the risk of being sanctioned or killed (although that might happen). Therefore, in the social practice, political and social activists can assess the level of threat and the opportunities to venture an action and/or to maintain their independence but keep a low profile. During some key periods in Mexico, this allowed an important margin for action from some independent social organisations and movements, such as peasants and indigenous organisations, amongst others.[21] This is in clear contrast with dictatorships in South and Central America were there was chronic violence and spaces for action, participation and civil expression where closed from above for long periods of time.[22]

In the Mexican case, coercion was exerted by State agents and members of the PRI (one and the same) in order to condition, negate and/or threaten to cancel public services and goods (hospitals, land, water and fertilisers, amongst others) for those who did not vote for a certain candidate or opposed a certain public policy.

Indirect Control

Indirect control was exerted by third parties or agents that were not formally linked to the state apparatus in order to guarantee stability and order for the governing elites and

[21] The PRI regime opened spaces after severe political and economic crises (1968, 1971, 1988, 1994), in order to recuperate or gain legitimacy amongst different sectors of the population. However, authors such as Wil Pansters argue that this responded to the elite's necessity to temporarily reach consensus and legitimacy more than being a genuine indicator of democratisation (Pansters 1999:247).

[22] Jenny Pearce has researched chronic violence in Colombia and Guatemala, where people´s lives are at risk all the time. Pearce, J. (2007). Violence, power and participation: Building citizenship in context of chronic violence. IDS Working Papers. Brighton, Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex.

maintain the *status quo*. Through this mechanism, different State agents managed to distance themselves from abuses and violence perpetrated by what official reports described as 'unknown individuals' (Schoijet and Worthington 1993:233).

In urban areas, the use of third parties to exert violence started to be denounced in the 1970s due to the high political cost that the PRI regime had to pay for the open repression against students in 1968. Subsequently, they decided to carry out covert actions and/or use third parties (Meyer 2007). These third parties have taken different names: *halcones* (falcons), paramilitaries, dead squads and *pistoleros* (gunmen), amongst others. These groups, acting under the direction and protection of local and federal powers, had the support and/or funding to intervene in social and political conflicts (Aristegui 2007).

In the rural areas, the exercise of indirect control was more complex. As previously mentioned, owing to the incomplete penetration and control throughout the whole country, the national governing elite decided to reach agreements with local elites, allowing them to maintain the monopoly of violence in exchange for guaranteeing control and stability in their respective regions. In order to do that, local elites, through *mestizo* and/or indigenous caciques built complex intermediation structures between the State and rural areas (Bartra 2007:28-9). These local leaders used paramilitary groups, *guardias blancas* (white guards), *pistoleros* and other irregular forces strongly linked to the PRI and, in some cases, with the complicity of the authorities at the different government levels (Aubry and Inda 1998; Stephen 1999:828).[23] Their main mission was the surveillance and protection of their bosses' properties, maintaining the order in their areas of influence, frightening the

[23] Lynn Stephen argues that there have been some groups linked to the PRI such as Antorcha Campesina, a reactionary organisation that has divided the efforts of different independent peasant organisations. In Oaxaca, for example, it has been associated with paramilitary violence (Stephen 1999:828).

opposition and carrying out what is considered counterinsurgent activities (Berger 2001:161). Also in the early 1970s, as a result of the legitimacy crisis caused by the open use of violence, the governing elite decided to design and use concealed repression strategies against the opposition, examples of this strategy include the so-called "Dirty War"[24] that took place mainly in Guerrero against rural guerrilla groups (Castellanos 2007; Meyer 2007).

Direct Violence

The use of direct violence was also a relevant control mechanism of the regime, which, as previously mentioned, has been recently recognised by academics that have focused on Mexican history and its political system. The concept of violence has been widely debated and challenged, so there is not a single definition.[25] Nonetheless, this research uses the World Health Organization's definition of violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation" (WHO 1996). Based on this definition, State violence is understood as physical or psychological violence exerted by State agents,[26] which embodies a direct threat to the physical integrity and the lives of opponents or independent persons or groups. This can be expressed as assassinations,

[24] The Frente Nacional contra la Represión (National Front Against Repression), created in 1979, reported that as a result of the Dirty War in the 1970s, at least 700 disappearances, 1,500 political prisoners and hundreds of exiled people have been documented (Granados Chapa 2007).
[25] Violence is a very complex and ambiguous concept that has been seriously debated because its scope and meaning changes with time and from one place to another (Nordstrom 1997:115). The causes of violence are clearly multiple and cannot be explained by one set of conditions. There is little consensus regarding violence because not all members of society recognise the same actions as violent. Therefore, authors like Jonathan Galtung (1996) have suggested that achieving a definitive conclusion regarding violence might not be a necessary exercise.
[26] This includes members of the army, the security forces, the police and government officials.

disappearances, torture, forced displacement, sterilisations, and military harassment, amongst others.

In Mexico, direct and open violence against opponents, such as the one used for the repression of students in 1968, has been considered as a diversion from the norm (Knight 1999:118), which does not mean it did not exist, as Chapter Two of this thesis analyses. However, since 1994 –when the EZLN emerged as an indigenous based armed group–, cases related to this kind of violence have multiplied as part of the crises of the different State control mechanisms.[27]

In sum, for many years the post-revolutionary elite managed to efficiently exploit a wide spectrum of control mechanisms to deal with the general population and particularly with autonomous opponents. This research explores the significance of understanding the post-revolutionary regime beyond the dichotomy of *institutional incorporation or use of violence* and stresses the interrelated relationship between those two forms of State control. In this sense, in those regions of the country where an effective incorporation system took place due to a bigger presence of the State, violence was used to a lesser degree. On the contrary, in those places where there was a lower level of State penetration and, therefore, the incorporation system was less efficient, a wide repertoire of control mechanisms, including direct violence, was used.

[27] The best known recent cases are: the murder of peasants in Aguas Blancas, Guerrero (1996); the killing of Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero (1998); the repression of *ejidatarios* in Atenco and Texcoco, Estado de Mexico (2005); the continuous harassment of autonomous Zapatista communities in Chiapas (1994-2008), among others.

However, in the era of neo-liberal globalisation, there has been an important change as the incorporation system has become weaker and less effective, the State has increasingly resorted to coercion and violence. This could be explained by the exhaustion of the multiple control mechanisms of the State caused by the change in the State model toward neoliberalism. In turn, this generates a change in the relationship between the State and society, which is expressed in the reduction of resources used to allocate goods for supporters or buy loyalties. Nowadays, this situation is getting worse as those sectors or groups that accepted some form of corporatism or clientelism in the past, such as indigenous groups, are now better organised and aware of their rights, and reject new forms of re-incorporation and violence from above, as it will be explored in the case studies.

A New Approach to the Formation of the Mexican State

This debate requires a revision of the way in which the formation of the Mexican State has been analysed since it has been wrongly understood as a centralised, formal and monolithic entity and the informal elements of the Mexican political praxis have been ignored. Such a revision offers important clues to understand the incomplete formation of the State in the past, the role that violence played in the process of state building, and why the State responds more violently now than in previous decades.

In this sense, Wil Pansters suggests it is necessary to support a new theory of the State in which it is not conceived as a coherent and articulated actor, but as a fragmented set of institutions and practices. A more sophisticated theory of the State that deepens the understanding of State and politics is needed to include the diversity of meanings and local political practices, where power is represented and challenged (Pansters 2005:363).

Along the same line, Rubin emphasises the importance of decentralising the analysis of Mexican politics by taking it "outside formal politics" (Rubin 1994:110). He suggests abandoning the analysis of the State as a structure of strong centralised institutions and embracing it instead as incomplete, permeable, non-uniform, non-centralised and non-hegemonic. He even suggests recovering Foucault and Gramsci, and speaking instead about diffuse power and a questioned hegemony something that has been given insufficient attention in the Mexican case (Rubin 1994:135).

One of the theories that could be useful in this regard is Charles Tilly's theory on State formation, which could help explore the conditions that led to the consolidation of western European States through comparative studies, especially the centralisation[28]and "*civilianisation*"[29] of power. The former is related to the monopoly of force through controlling the means of violence, and the latter is related to the legitimisation of State power (Tilly 1990). These conditions would allow an understanding of the incomplete formation of the Mexican State that has caused the modernisation and democratisation processes to advance at different paces in different regions and/or governmental spheres. On the contrary, as Miguel Ángel Centeno argues, what characterises post-Independence Latin American States in general, and Mexico in particular, is not the centralisation of power but the dilution or spread of political authority (Centeno 2002:10). Therefore, Mexico emerged with a limited central authority and could not guarantee the monopoly of

[28] The process of centralisation and control of the means of violence implies a change from private to State control through different mechanisms such as the disarmament of civilians, the elimination of or subordination of intermediaries –both from mercenaries and local autonomous powers-, the creation of a national professional army, and the consolidation of bureaucratic institutions and infrastructure for the administration of law, order and tax collection (Tilly 1990).

[29] The civilianisation process includes, apart from the segregation of the military from civilian life, the creation of political institutions to routinely negotiate with different sectors of the civil population to guarantee citizens rights in exchange of duties (Tilly 1990).

the use of violence. For these reasons, in some places there were authoritarian enclaves where old rules are still in force (Lawson 2000:267). As the case studies explore, the elites in control of those enclaves have slowed down and even stopped altogether both the development of democratisation and economic modernisation as is the case of the region of the Costa Chica-Montaña of Guerrero in Mexico.

Regarding the "civilianisation of power", Centeno states that highly despotic State structures were built, which allowed the governing elites to take decisions without routinely negotiating with society; and State infrastructure is weak and lacks the capacity to implement legitimately made decisions (Centeno 2002:55).[30]

This theory is useful in understanding the role that violence has played in the formation and consolidation of the nation-State as even when the use of violence in those process has been evident (Moore 1967; Huntington 1968; Skocpol 1979; Tilly 1990; Koonings and Kruijt 1999); in countries like Mexico -where there have been incomplete State consolidation processes- violence is still the main instrument used by the governing elites. This has helped them to push forward economic models of capital accumulation or to compensate for the malfunctions caused by an unfinished system (Bartra 1993:32).[31]This situation has two different explanations: firstly, elites resisted structural changes in social and production

[30] Miguel Angel Centeno argues that one of the most important contrasts between Western European and Latin American states is that the latter did not face great wars; hence "limited wars" produce limited States. The lack of a total war did not allow the building and subsequent transformation of solid institutions that regulate the relationship between the State and society in order to achieve legitimacy. State violence was focused internally not externally since "enemies" were identified inside not outside national states, in contrast to what happened in European countries. Furthermore, in Latin America there were not hegemonic unified elites that perceived the importance of the State's strengthening as an advantage. Finally, in this region of the continent, centralisation of authority was not achieved, and there was no control of the national territory, which indirectly created and consolidated "local powers" or caudillos (Centeno 2002:139).

[31] Dirk Kruijt and Kees Koonings state that violence has been a main characteristic of the construction of Latin American states since it has maintained an oligarchic and excluded social order (Kruijt and Koonings 1999:5).

relationships (Moore 1967:438); and, secondly, because *civilianisation,* that determines the relationship between the State and society through the formation of efficient institutions to negotiate and legitimise power, has been traditionally weak; therefore, the State has not managed to establish democratic relationships with citizens.

Additionally, the theory of State formation offers important elements for understanding the situation of indigenous peoples in Mexico, through recognising the uneven penetration of State institutions throughout the national territory to reinforce the State hegemony. This caused the lack of consolidation of national unity around one same identity, which was not the case in most Western countries. Therefore, there are still some peoples that have not been fully "integrated" within the national project as in the case of some indigenous peoples in Mexico.

In this sense, the incomplete formation of the State and the failure of a Unitarian[32] model allowed the formation of semi-autonomous spaces in which different cultural identities could survive discreetly (Hernández Navarro and Carlsen 2004:441; Otero 2004:224; Yashar 2005:7). All this could happen only if the governing elites did not think that the nation- State and their projects to accumulate capital were threatened. Those ethnic groups that were perceived as threats were killed, marginalised to remote areas and/or their existence was explicitly denied (van Cott 2000b:207; Yashar 2005:287).

[32] The Unitarian model fostered the homogenisation of the population as a condition for the consolidation of national unity. Therefore, despite ethnic and cultural diversity, the State tried to impose one legal system, one language, one religion, one currency and one cultural identity (Stavenhagen 1992:425; 2002:24).

Toward a New Formation of the Mexican State?

With the recurrent economic crisis and the subsequent political and social instability in the country during the 1970s (a situation that became more acute in the 1980s), the governing elites once again had to face the failure of the formation of the Mexican State and its corporatist authoritarian model. Accordingly, they were forced to look for other ways to build the State and hence opted for a neo-liberal model. This process has been carried out in tandem with a new form of global capital accumulation and a new policy vis-à-vis the State and society. As it will be subsequently discussed in this research, this has created opportunities but also risks for indigenous peoples, especially through fostering multicultural policies.

The adoption of the neo-liberal economic model, that marked the end of the post-revolutionary model, has brought with it an increase in violence (Gledhill 1998:9; Knight 1999:119; Pansters 1999:237). This phenomenon is explained by the current neo-liberal government's lack of legitimacy, ability or necessary resources to use the control mechanisms that allowed them to combine a 'carrot and stick' approach like in the past. Furthermore, the State does not have the support of the traditional bases since it broke some alliances with local caciques and corporate sectors in order to build new alliances with national business people and transnational capital. The change of allies and the lack of substitute methods of representation and mediation have caused a great deal of discontentment and lack of organisation at the national level but particularly at the local level. Therefore, the links between State and society have been broken, especially those with the rural population. The problem lies in that so far this rupture has not been repaired and new links have not been created.

President Carlos Salinas (1988-1994) tried to introduce neo-corporatist measures in order to maintain the necessary stability required to reinforce the economic shift towards neo-liberalism. Hence, he launched the Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (National Solidarity Programme) in order to create a new social base and new direct alliances with the population without local intermediaries. However, there were obstacles at the regional level and inside corporatist sectors, so the government finally decided to reproduce the old PRI practices that were clientelistic and arbitrary imposed (Craske 1996:78-91). Therefore, the subsequent neo-liberal governments have not been able to create new control and legitimisation mechanisms so far to apply their economic model with political and social stability.

Consequently, as Pansters suggests, the combination of drastic measures for structural adjustment due to the implantation of the neo-liberal model together with the existence of malfunctioning institutions and the decomposition of personalistic networks and loyalties has increased violence at all levels as well as bringing along new forms of disorganised violence (Pansters 1999:256). However, the governing elites need to maintain the neo-liberal economic model, so they use 'more sticks than carrots' (Knight 1999:119). This situation has become more complicated due to different factors: the heightened awareness of indigenous populations regarding their rights and their subsequent mobilisation to protect them; the deep social discontent due to the high cost of the change in the State model and the few benefits for different social groups; the re-emergence of non-state armed groups together with a deeper penetration of drug-trafficking and a recent militarisation of public security in the country. The latter two factors have further fuelled violence at the national level.

In sum, throughout the history of post-Independence Mexico, there have been at least three attempts to build the nation State. However, the State has not been able to accomplish the corresponding transformation processes, particularly regarding the total "centralisation" and "civilianisation" of power. Therefore, the State is neither consolidated nor ready to face the neo-liberal globalisation process. It lacks the democratic and legitimate institutions necessary for a functioning rule of law at the national level and has a coercive apparatus that grows stronger. Furthermore, it faces two serious challenges: on the one hand, there is a powerful pressure exerted "from the outside" pushing the country to open its economy and liberate its resources (Pearce 1998); on the other hand, there is a growing pressure "from below" in the form of organised indigenous peoples that have become new political actors.[33] Currently, those peoples are challenging the way in which they have been "incorporated" in the past and refuse to be "re-incorporated" again according to the requirements of the global market, so they have demanded active participation in the imminent state reconfiguration process.

The following section analyses the different academic approaches which can be used to explain the emergence and development of indigenous movements in Latin American in general. This facilitates an understanding of why indigenous movements emerged and strengthened themselves in Mexico and their interaction with the State agents, as well as the parallel growing use of State violence.

[33] Organised indigenous peoples have turned themselves into new political actors since, contrary to their past actions; they have created their own initiatives and projects over the last 15 years with a view to their future. They have become, through different forms of organisation, collective actors, aware of their reality, willing to influence public policies and interact with different levels of the State (Esteva 2001). They have even created an alternative counter-hegemonic project (Otero 2004).

B) Recognising Policies "from above" and Political Identities "from below": The Dialectics of the Relationships between the State and Indigenous Peoples.[34]

The Complexity of Indigenous Diversity

In the mid-1990s, the biggest and most diverse mobilisation of indigenous organisations in the history of Latin American arose. They had an enormous impact on State policies, the concept of nation States and citizenship.[35] This does not mean that indigenous groups had not actively mobilised themselves in the past. They organised and manifested themselves under other identities such as national groups or social classes. In any case, previous actions were essentially localised and did not support the specific agendas of the indigenous peoples (Assies 1999; Postero and Zamosc 2004:1; Yashar 2005).

One of the most important characteristics of indigenous movements in the Americas is their heterogeneity which is reflected in the different forms of organisation and struggle, which have notably varied throughout the region. Equally, there is not a universal set of demands or claims. In some cases, they coincide, but there are also important differences (Postero and Zamosc 2004:15).

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[34] Phrase taken from Assies, Willem et al. (2006). "Autonomy rights and the politics of constitutional reform in Mexico", Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies, **1** (1) p.37.

[35] Since the 1990s, there have been great mobilisations in Bolivia demanding territory and dignity. Similarly, Ecuador saw the first indigenous arising led by CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) which had a huge influence at the national level. Subsequently, there were massive demonstrations in rejection of the official ceremony of the discovery of America. In Mexico in 1994, the EZLN arose and challenged the neo-liberal model. Ecuador has currently the strongest indigenous movement in the continent that has transformed rural organisations and State policies related to bicultural education, land reform and territorial autonomy. In Bolivia, despite the lack of a national organisation, there are strong regional organisations with the ability to act at the national level and that have played a key role in the country's politics, even forming their own indigenous political party. Recommended further reading on indigenous movements: Yashar 2005, Van Cott 2000a, Sieder 2002, Postero and Zamosc 2004 and Dean and Levin 2003, amongst others.

One of the most evident coincidences is the struggle for self-determination using different means and methods. This has to do with the possibility of exerting control over their own destiny as peoples, over their lives, lands and resources. There are also clear differences on the issue of autonomy and their relationship with different State agents.[36]

There have been different studies that have contributed to demystifying the idea of homogeneity and harmony of indigenous communities and these help explain the different interactions inside and outside the groups. In this sense, there is relevant research stressing the presence of social division inside indigenous communities. Such divisions are enhanced by age, gender, ethnicity, wealth and literacy (Mallon 1995; Hernández C. 2001; Sieder 2002:11; Gutiérrez Chong 2004:36). All those factors have contributed to a wider understanding of diverse actions and forms of indigenous organisation in Latin America, even inside each country, region and community.

The complexities of indigenous mobilisations as well as their internal and external heterogeneity make generalisations impossible. Therefore, case studies are needed to highlight the complexity and particularities vis-à-vis different phenomena and civil or State actors.

Similarly, as previously mentioned, it is important to consider the growing academic approach that insists on the need to carry out regional and local research which contributes to decentralising the analysis of the State and its different structures. This could be the

[36] There are important differences with regards to autonomy. There are indigenous organisations that want regional autonomy to govern themselves whilst others want to return to the organisational form they had before the Colonial period at the local level (Postero and Zamosc 2004:6). It is important to mention that extreme radical groups that talk about territorial separation or solely indigenous territory (without any mestizos) are just a minority. This was the case of candidate Felipe Quispe, rival of Evo Morales in Bolivia (Canessa, 2006:241).

starting point for questioning the homogeneity of the political culture of the State and demystifying the conception of the state apparatus as monolithic at the national level (Fox 1994; Rubin 1994; Fox 2000; Pansters 2005). This approach has been key to understanding the permeability and uneven penetration of the State in different regions, which in turn explains the multiplicity of responses of the State to the different socio-political sectors and vice versa.

Current Approaches to the Emergence and Development of Organised Indigenous Peoples in Latin America

Due to the rise and dynamism of indigenous movements in Latin America in the 1990s, there has been a growing academic interest in understanding and explaining the emergence of such movements and their interaction with State institutions, primarily through case studies and/or comparative studies.

One of the most eminent recent studies is Donna van Cott's, *The friendly liquidation of the past: The politics of diversity in Latin America* (2000a), which offers a key contribution to the development and limitations of the struggles of indigenous peoples to institutionalise their social, political and cultural proposals. She explores case studies in Bolivia and Colombia and complements them with a valuable comparison of experiences in other countries in Latin America. Another important publication is Nancy Postero and León Zamosc's, *The struggle for indigenous rights in Latin America* (2004), which covers diverse case studies. The authors insist on the heterogeneity of indigenous struggles throughout Latin America and in the prioritisation of internal factors to understand them.

Deborah Yashar, in her book *Contesting citizenship in Latin America: The rise of indigenous movements and the postliberal challenge*, has developed a relevant approach for the analysis of indigenous movements. It is a comparative historical study that stresses the coincidence of three internal factors in order to explain when and why such movements arose in some regions and not in others: a) the change of citizenship regimes through the adoption of the neo-liberal model provides the motive; b) the strengthening of transcommunity networks favours their capacity for action; c) the opening of political spaces generates opportunities for mobilisations. The author emphasises that only when those three factors coincide, can relevant indigenous movement emerge. She used these factors in order to explain the strengths of indigenous movements in Ecuador and Bolivia and the weaknesses of those movements that emerged in Peru. Although her compared studies include the cases of Mexico and Guatemala, these are not explored in detail. However, she states that there are regional movements in these two countries, which are "moderately strong" (Yashar 2005:59).

Rachel Sieder has also edited a book titled *Multiculturalism in Latin America: indigenous rights, diversity, and democracy* (2002) that presents a comparative analysis with different case studies to explain how new legal changes that recognise cultural diversity policies have been implemented, owned and challenged all around Latin America. This increased the tension amongst State reforms, the impact of economic neo-liberalism and the indigenous movements' demands. Alison Brysk, in her book *From tribal village to global village: Indian rights and international relations in Latin America,* stresses that certain international phenomena favoured the development of such movements, especially the

existence of transnational allies and the growing importance of what the author calls international indigenous movements (Brysk 2000).[37]

Those studies highlight different factors, national and international, that favoured the emergence and subsequent development of indigenous movements in the different countries in Latin America. However, some authors argue that national contexts are vital to understanding the emergence of indigenous organisations, as in the case of the first three authors mentioned above.[38] In contrast, there are other authors that, like Brysk, attach greater importance to international factors. There is a third mixed approach from authors such as Sieder, Dean and Levi, in which both national and international factors are considered relevant to the emergence and strengthening of indigenous organisations and movements in Latin America.

With regards to the first group, authors such as Postero and Zamosc suggest that the factors that influence the characteristics of the movements and their struggles are highly dependent on the specificities of the countries in which indigenous peoples act.[39] Those movements thus depend on their internal situation in the countries regarding: a) their demographic weight in the country; b) the history of ethnic relations, especially the types of State policies towards indigenous peoples; c) the place given to indigenous peoples in the nation's imagination; and d) the political system and context (Postero and Zamosc

[37] There are other important titles such as Bartholomew Dean and Jerome Levi's (2003) At the risk of being heard: Identity, indigenous rights, and postcolonial States; and Edward Cleary and Timothy Steigenga's (2004) Resurgent voices in Latin America: Indigenous peoples, political mobilization, and religious change, amongst others.

[38] It is important to stress that these studies do not negate the influence of international factors. However, national ones are defined as the most important ones.

[39] Yashar argues that what caused indigenous movements in Latin America was, to a great extent, a response to internal changes, conditions and development in each country. For her, globalisation should not be considered as the definitive cause of the emergence of indigenous movements since it cannot explain, on its own, the importance of temporal, geographical and identity-related diversities (Yashar 2006:176).

2004:25). In contrast, the so called 'globalist' authors purport that international phenomena have mainly favoured the development of movements, particularly through the increasing body of international legislation regarding human rights, indigenous rights and environmental protection. There has also been an influence from multilateral actors that have been pushing for global economic integration and the existence of international alliances.

Despite the debate around the higher or lower impact of international and national factors in the emergence of indigenous movements in Latin America, there is an important convergence amongst the different authors, which is related to change in the State model towards neo-liberalism.

The Introduction of the Neo-liberal Model as a Catalyst for the Emergence of Indigenous Movements

The catalysing phenomenon that marks a radical difference with former organisations and actions of indigenous movements in Latin America is the reformulation of the state apparatus because regimes in different countries adopted a neo-liberal development model in the 1980s and 1990s.[40]

Since the beginning of the 1980s, multilateral financial organisations have exerted a strong pressure on Latin American states to adopt neo-liberal policies. This causes the state apparatus to shrink and become more efficient through the decentralisation of public

[40] This idea is confirmed by different academics such as Hale 2002, Harvey 2001, Postero and Zamosc 2004; Middlebrook 2004:31, Nash 2006:125, Sieder 2002:4, Van Cott 2000a:25 and Yashar 2005, amongst others.

functions and the integration of the State into the global economy (van Cott 2000a:275). Likewise, they have pushed for the modernisation of the judiciary as part of the establishment of the rule of law (Sieder 2006).

The implementation of neo-liberal policies has dramatically altered the social, political and economic contexts in which indigenous movements emerge and act in Latin America. Although there are important variations from country to country, the following general changes can be seen as directly affecting indigenous peoples: a) there has been a political restructuring in the nature of the relationship between the State and the indigenous populations; b) an economic restructuring has caused dramatic economic crises that particularly affect the rural indigenous population (Postero and Zamosc 2004:21), especially because the commercial opening of the State has accelerated the penetration of the market in indigenous communities, even in the most marginalised ones (Yashar 2005; Nash 2006). This represents a higher threat against indigenous resources due to the emphasis on schemes of extraction of resources and, as Neil Harvey notes, indigenous communities have become important sources of resources for national and transnational companies that globally compete for resources (Harvey 2001:1045).[41]

There are multiple responses from indigenous movements to the changes in the State model towards neo-liberalism. This multiplicity of responses can be explained by the great complexity of the regional context, the huge heterogeneity of such movements and the differentiated links with states and market agents. Postero and Zamosc suggest that there has been a very wide range of responses, from cooperation to open confrontation. In

[41] Neil Harvey points out that there is an international struggle for the use of biological resources and indigenous knowledge, particularly from transnational companies involved in the life sciences (especially pharmaceutical and agrochemical companies) (Harvey 2001:1045).

relation to the former, they refer to the collaboration of some indigenous peoples with neo-liberal governments; they have taken advantage of the political opening and new governmental programmes to gain some resources for their members. Other indigenous movements have increased their opposition to neo-liberal reforms and have consolidated their struggle in alliance with other sectors that have also been seriously affected (Postero and Zamosc 2004:21).

Following this order of ideas, Dean and Levi suggest that due to the transition of the state apparatus towards the neo-liberal model and the strong international and national pressures regarding the way of living and resources of indigenous peoples, they have relied upon "various weapons of the weak",[42] and have organised themselves and acted politically. Therefore, the struggles of such peoples include the adaptations to new conditions; the reaffirmation of their rights through public protests; the formation of multiethnic coalitions; participation in local and/or national elections; and even violent confrontation to transform power conditions and structures (Dean and Levi 2003:23-6).

Due to the great diversity of responses from indigenous peoples to the changes in the State model, this research follows the mixed analysis approach whereby both international and national factors that favoured the emergence and development of organised indigenous populations in Latin America are taken into account. Subsequently, there will be an empirical exploration based on two case studies in the region of Costa Chica- Montaña de Guerrero, Mexico. Moreover, the role that State violence has played regarding the

[42] The term "*various weapons of the weak"* was originally employed by James Scott (1985) in his book, *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*, where he analyses the different resistance strategies of indigenous populations in Malaysia such as retreat, passive resistance, silence, indifference and lack of cooperation, amongst others.

increasingly organised and politically challenging responses of indigenous peoples to the neo-liberal model will also be explored.

Some of the most important factors that explain the emergence and consolidation of indigenous movements will be analysed in the next section: a) key changes in the international context; b) the shift in the relationship between the State and society; c) political liberalisation; and d) multi-ethnic and multi-class alliances.

Key Changes in the International Context

With the end of the Cold War (1945-1989), the international context and the bodies in charge of international legislation -especially those related to the protection of human rights, the environment and the rights of indigenous peoples- gained momentum. This phenomenon generated what Rachel Sieder calls the transnationalised construction of the rule of law. This concept covers, on the one hand, a "globalisation from above" and, on the other hand, the appropriation of the instruments and discourse regarding the rights for a "globalisation from below" in order to respond to the effects of globalisation, creating hybrid legal spaces (Sieder 2006:1). In this context, the author argues that indigenous communities in Latin America are legitimising their claims using national, regional and transnational legal resources in order to resist the effects of globalisation and the accelerated exploitation of natural resources in their territories as well as to confront what they consider to be discriminatory or authoritarian practices (Sieder 2006:14-7).

One of the most important international instruments regarding indigenous rights is the International Labour Organisation's (ILO), Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and

Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries that was signed by several countries in 1989 and came into force in 1991.[43] This Convention had an important impact on national constitutions and has been repeatedly used by indigenous peoples to support their demands in different Latin American countries. [44] One of the most important points of the Convention is the fact that it explicitly rejects previous assimilationist and integrationist policies and fosters the respect for multiculturalism. All this has put a great pressure on nation states to recognise and adapt ethnic differences within their territories (Dean and Levi 2003:10).

Since 1991, a proposal for an Inter-American Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been in the process of development in the region. However, in April 2007, there were still negotiations going on and the representatives of different governments could not agree on the topic of regional autonomy since there is an awkward discussion on what some countries consider a risk to their national territorial integration (OEA 2007). In this sense, as Donna van Cott points out, the topic of self-determination has become one of the biggest obstacles to the acceptance of Indigenous Rights both in the United Nations and the Organisation of American States (van Cott 2000a:265).

Likewise there have been international events that favoured and strengthened the mobilisation of indigenous organisations in Latin America. One of the most important ones has been the commemoration of 500 years of the "Meeting of two worlds" which has been celebrated through different international forums in 1991 and 1992. Those spaces for

[43] Convention 169 eliminates the paternalistic and assimilationist language of the previous Convention 107 of 1957, and emphasises the responsibility of the State to guarantee that policies related to indigenous populations are consulted and promote the participation of such peoples (Van Cott 2000a:262).

[44] The corresponding constitutional reforms have taken place in Guatemala (1985), Nicaragua (1986), Colombia (1991), Mexico (1992), Peru (1993), Paraguay (1997), Ecuador (1998) (Sieder 2002:33; Van Cott 2000a:266-7)

discussion paved the way for an exchange of experiences and tools of struggle and the launch of the Continental Campaign of 500 years of Indigenous, Black and Popular Resistance. Another event that allowed indigenous peoples to gain presence in international forum was the 1992 "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where environmental topics were discussed and indigenous peoples were appointed as guardians or caretakers of the Earth. All these concluded with the decision of the United Nations to institute the international decade of indigenous peoples (1995-2004), that finished with the writing up of a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Dean and Levi 2003:2).[45]

In addition, there are more spaces for ethnic and cultural identities due to the collapse of socialist States in the 1990s, the decline or weaken of leftist parties and labour movements, and the rapid penetration of capitalist markets in previously marginalized rural areas. Since then, peoples in these areas have intensified the defence of their spiritual, religious and cultural identity as well as their demands for a higher political participation and guarantees regarding their collective rights.[46]

Indigenous peoples have realised that in order to be heard, they have to mobilise themselves and need allies to support them (Dean and Levi 2003). Later in this thesis, the importance of international networks and alliances for indigenous movements will be analysed in more detail. However, it is necessary to briefly mention the key role of alliances in strengthening the capacity for action of such movements in the public sphere

[45] The Declaration was approved by the Human Rights Council and subsequently by the UN General Assembly on 14th September 2007. The Declaration establishes that indigenous peoples should have collective and individual access to all human rights and fundamental liberties recognised by the UN. The most important aspects include the right to self-determination, land and resources control, and preservation of culture and traditions of those communities (Regino 2007; López Barcena 2007; Gómez 2007)

[46] Crawford 1993, quoted in van Cott 2000a:12.

and their heightened impact in different socio-political arenas. In this sense, transnational networks have allowed small local organisations to establish alliances with other organisations that have facilitated their presence in international forums and enabled them to put pressure on the representatives of their respective national governments. Likewise, through these forums the exchange of experiences and ways of struggle have been fostered, especially regarding the use of legal instruments to defend and protect human rights (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Brysk 2000a).

The most important international allies of indigenous movements have been environmental groups and civil society organisations dedicated to defending and protecting human rights. Such movements have also established relevant collaborative ties with women and consumer networks (North-South).

The Shift of Relationship between the State and Society

As previously mentioned, multiple economic crises in the 1970s that worsened in the following decade, stem from the exhaustion of the economic model of industrialisation, and forced the governing elites to adopt a radical change in the structure of the State and its economy (van Cott 2000a:7). This was influenced by external pressures, especially from international financial bodies that demanded the liberalisation of economies and the adoption of drastic measures of structural adjustment to deal with subsequent crises.

As a consequence, the corporatist State model became a neo-liberal one, a shift which inevitably caused a deep change in the relationship between the State and society. Such change has been seen particularly in the reformulation of alliances and ruptures of ties with

the different sectors that used to be the main pillars of political and social stability and represented an important source of legitimacy.

It is important to point out that neo-liberalism should not only be seen as an economic model that involves the liberalisation of economy and the cutback of the state apparatus. Different authors suggest that it comes with radical social, cultural and legal changes (Sieder 2002, Hale 2002, Yashar 2005). For example, Charles Hale suggests that the neo-liberal model not only reforms the mandate of the economic policy, but is a process of subject formation i.e. a process that forms and transforms individual and collective subjects (Hale 2002:20). In this sense, the model fosters a higher responsibility and autonomy of individuals with regards to the market and a lower dependence regarding the State (Middlebrook 2004:45). Neil Harvey even mentions the new "market citizenship" in which individuals are urged, trained and forced to establish new global relationships with similar commercialised societies (Harvey 2001:1047). In practice, this has been reflected in the withdrawal of different state institutions, development and integration policies to hand over that responsibility to the market and the individual.

Therefore, adopting the neo-liberal model implied an institutional change that has brought, in some cases, a dramatic cut and, in others, a gradual dismantling of systems of social protection and provision of goods that were the responsibility of the State. In the past, such systems were part of the clientelistic regime of exchanges and benefits. This change has impacted on the population in general but especially the rural indigenous population because the State has retreated from many social programs and allowances schemes. As George Collier suggests, in the Mexican case: "With the official culmination of the Land

Reform in 1992, rural workers were robbed not only of the chance to a piece of land but also of their hope" (Collier 2000:20).[47]

In this sense, since the Mexican State adopted the neo-liberal model, especially since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into force in 1994, rural indigenous peoples have been excluded from global competition because they are neither producers nor consumers for the requirements of the global market (Harvey 2001:1048). Furthermore, they have to compete with large national and transnational companies for resources in their territories including, amongst other things, their own lands, biodiversity, water and medical traditional knowledge.

One of the main consequences of the rupture of ties between the State and rural indigenous peoples has been that the mechanisms of institutional incorporation and mediation have weakened. In the past, they used to be agreed mainly through the CNC (a PRI corporatist organisation) whereby such peoples were recognised as peasants and, as such, were allocated resources and political representation. In turn, such weakening has generated two main effects: on the one hand, political self-identification has been strengthened and they have used an ethnic claim strategy to put together their own political demands (Brown 1998:229; Leyva 1998:51); on the other hand, the PRI powerbase has been eroded and has favoured opposition parties, which have shown a significant political and electoral advance since 1988, especially at the local level.

[47] Recommended reading on analysis and impacts of neo-liberal measures on indigenous populations: Postero, N. and Zamosc, L. (2004) Indigenous movements and the indian question in Latin America in Postero and Zamoc (eds.) The struggle for indigenous rights in Latin America, Brighton, Sussex Academic Press.

Deborah Yashar argues that the transition from a corporatist regime to a neo-liberal one was a trigger for the organisation of indigenous peoples as a response to the negative effects of neo-liberal policies regarding their economic and social order and the threat to their natural resources and way of life. This author also argues that the change of regime politicised indigenous identities since the political and material conditions for local autonomy were altered and such autonomy had not been recognised nor threatened by the State policies in a long time (Yashar 2005). Likewise, in some cases the intermediation of local caciques was interrupted, which affected them as now they do not have the same resources as in the past and their alliances with the central government are not as strong as they used to be.

Due to the great crisis of legitimacy that stemmed from the exhaustion of the corporatist system and the tough structural adjustment measures fostered by neo-liberalism, some Latin American states have carried out different constitutional reforms. These include, on the one hand, a formal recognition of multiculturalism and, on the other, the decentralisation of public resources. However, regarding the former, Donna van Cott emphasises that many institutional changes do not have the necessary mechanisms for their implementation and do not come in tandem with secondary laws that ensured their effective implementation. Instead, they have been mere attempts at legitimisation policies without practical consequences in the daily lives of the indigenous populations (Van Cott 2000). Nonetheless, as it will be explained later on, some organised indigenous peoples have taken advantage of international legislations and reforms to national institutions in order to defend their rights and stop action being undertaken against their communities. For example, organised indigenous people have stopped the construction of dams in their territories with the legal argument that the affected communities were not informed and

consulted prior the project being undertaken (Hindley 1996). Likewise, with decentralisation programmes, possibilities for the participation of indigenous peoples in development plans have been opened, especially at the local and municipal levels.

Political Liberalisation

The change towards a neo-liberal model has been accompanied by a process of political liberalisation in Latin America, where there has been a transition from authoritarian regimes to other more politically representative regimes.[48] During the authoritarian corporatism that prevailed up until the 1980s, the generation of autonomous and alternative spaces for participation and social-political action was limited and even prohibited. As previously mentioned, corporatism was used to both control and represent different sectors of society as well as to mediate with them. However, some indigenous communities managed to maintain semi-autonomous practices or discreet autonomies (only when these did not interfere with or threaten the ruling model of the elites). This restricted the space for action for the majority of activists who could not organise, express or openly mobilise themselves without fear or repression (Yashar 2005:76). Peasants and workers, who organised themselves independently, ran the risk of being continuously repressed and their leaders being frequently harassed, incarcerated or assassinated (Harvey 2001:1047). This explains why autonomous association and participation was avoided or discouraged until much later.

[48] It is important to point out that political liberalisation is not the same as democratisation, especially when the aim is an extended democracy. The latter implies not only respect for free and transparent electoral processes, routine participation in decision making and the implementation of public policies, but also a concept of citizenship that fully guarantees civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. Gustavo Esteva considers that with political liberalisation the State has committed to respecting the exercise of civil and political rights and abandoned most of its responsibilities with regards to social and economic rights of its citizens. This has led to an increasingly minimalist definition of democracy and a limited concept and exercise of citizenship (Esteva 2001).

Political liberalisation has mainly involved the opening of spaces for the association and expression of different organised social sectors, which has favoured collective action. This phenomenon has provided different civil society actors with new opportunities to participate and confront the State and its policies (Yashar 2005). Similarly, expectations amongst indigenous peoples regarding a new social pact, in which different relationships between the indigenous population and the State, have been generated (Sieder 2002:4).

As part of the political liberalisation process the existence of oppositional and autonomous groups has been formalised. This has been especially relevant to different independent political parties and the media,[49] and in some cases it has strengthened the struggle of previously subordinated sectors such as indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples have taken advantage of the political opening to collectively organise themselves, which widens their opportunities to act politically, especially in an attempt to influence public policies that affect them. However, political liberalisation has not evenly developed at the national, regional, and local levels. Even in some localities it has been partially stifled by sustained local or regional authoritarianism, as is the case of some areas in the South East of Mexico. Consequently, in some regions, the leaders of indigenous organisation still run the risk of facing political, military and economic repression (Dean and Levi 2003:10).

The existence of a wider opening of spaces for action facilitates a higher interrelation amongst the different actors. In turn, this favours the generation of more diverse proposals

[49] For example, it was not until 1976 that the Mexican Communist Party acquired a legal status in Mexico.

and alternatives that better reflect the consensus of different social and political actors, as in the case of the networks and alliances that will be analysed in the following section.

The Existence of Multi-ethic, and Multi-class Alliances and Networks

There are different forms of alliances or networks such as trans-community,[50] regional, national and international ones. All of these have provided indigenous organisations or movements with the organisational capacity and diverse resources to broaden and advance their influence. Similarly, they have allowed them to promote their demands at different geographical and social levels, and in some cases they have even contested the State in a more robust fashion (Yashar 2005:8).

Amongst the most significant resources provided by alliances and networks for the collective action of the different indigenous organisations (long divided by geography and language), it is the exchange of experiences and the articulation of common strategies with other ethnic groups and social classes that stand out. This improves their communication, exchange and cooperation. The alliances with other vulnerable sectors that are also affected by neo-liberal policies have allowed such organisations to strengthen their struggle since they have combined their efforts and resources to organise protests and build proposals with which to contest the State neoliberal model. Alliances allow them to have a higher impact and a greater chance of influencing unfavourable governmental policies and promoting their own alternative proposals.

[50] Term used by Débora Yashar (2005) to refer to alliances that transcend the community space.

Thanks to the interaction of indigenous organisations and movements with other ethnic groups and/or social classes, their demands and social and political agendas have been strengthened and widened to include topics on human rights, the environment and the respect of minorities, as well as the extension of democracy and the concept of citizenship. All this has resulted, at the same time, in a widening of the non-indigenous support base, which, in turn, strengthens their struggle. The combination of class and ethnicity claims has been one of the most important and successful strategies of the indigenous movements, particularly of the Zapatistas (Postero and Zamosc 2004:25).

In sum, the negative effects of neo-liberalism have given indigenous movements the opportunity to develop stronger alliances with other affected non-indigenous actors. Such partnerships have allowed indigenous peoples to transcend ethnic identities in order to establish alliances with diverse national and international social groups (Nash 2006:126).

Furthermore, the alliances and networks offer protection to local movements and organisations since they avoid or lessen the high risk and costs of mobilisation and/or denounces against the more powerful, something they can hardly achieve unilaterally in their countries. Civil society organisations, churches, peasants, academics and workers unions, some political parties and other indigenous groups are amongst the most important actors that make up the alliances and networks.

Such alliances have allowed indigenous peoples to take advantage of the history of struggle and organisation of the different participant groups. At the same time, the peasant sector has been highly affected and in some cases even "*Indianizado*" through exchanges with indigenous organisations (Burguete C. 1999:260; Postero and Zamosc 2004:22).

Moreover, the role played by the progressive Catholic Church (especially groups linked to the Theology of Liberation) and new Christian churches has been crucial for indigenous organisations. They have offered advice, resources and solidarity to indigenous movements in order to get resources, but also some have become some kind of new intermediaries (Cleary and Steigenga 2004). The same has happened with some civil organisations and political parties.

One of the biggest challenges for indigenous movements, in order to have an impact upon public policies and on the reform of the State, is the necessity of establishing political alliances especially with political parties. In some cases, as in Mexico, this is their only political option. However, following the logic of political parties and the electoral system in general entails a risk of their strategies becoming concentrated on fighting for power and votes. In that case, their interactions with base groups and their original demands could be left aside (Yashar 2005:302).

CONCLUSION

As it has been analyzed throughout this section, organised indigenous peoples have gone through unprecedented qualitative and quantitative changes in Latin America. Apart from the diverse and growing mobilisations, protests, demonstrations and other types of manifestations throughout this region, many organised indigenous peoples have gone through important qualitative changes. These include the gradual formation of groups as collective political subjects, aware of their rights, with their own alternative projects in order to drive their destiny as peoples and interact with different State agents. In this sense,

their struggle is not simply focused on their incorporation within the pre-existing State project designed from above, but the participation in the reconfiguration of a new social pact that leads to a more multicultural State. They struggle for a State that guarantees their individual and collective rights i.e. their right to equality and difference. For these reasons, they want to extend the concept of citizenship and democracy so that it not only includes civil and political rights, but also economic, social and cultural ones.

Another qualitative change relates to the demands of indigenous organisations upon the State; they have gone from the mere defence of their land to incorporating the right to self-determination i.e. the right to govern themselves according to the systems and structures established within their territories. This is a particularly complex issue as the governing elites have manipulated the issue to associate it with separatist demands. However, this is a distortion of their demands since what indigenous peoples claim is self-determination to govern their own affairs and manage their natural resources according to their own normative systems.

The trigger for the actions of organised indigenous peoples has been the process of economic neo-liberalism that has forced the political elites to restructure the State to adapt or align better with the process of globalisation. In parallel, indigenous peoples have been favoured by national and international factors that provide them with an unprecedented political opportunity to organise and express themselves. This has turned them into one of the main socio-political actors that criticise the way in which the State was built and are contesting the way it is being reformulate in the neo-liberal era.

However, as the first section of this chapter noted, the different and increasingly well organised indigenous mobilisations face a governmental apparatus that gradually uses more visible State violence to confront those who oppose and/or contest the neoliberal State model. This situation could be explained by the further weakening of the "civilianisation power" of the Mexican State reflected in its limited legitimisation related with the deteriorarion of its incorporation mechanisms which, in the past, allowed the governing elite to partially build the State, consolidate its modernisation process and "solve the indigenous issue". This situation has been exacerbated by the different pressures from outside that the elite faces to reincorporate indigenous peoples and their resources into the logics of the global market.

This chapter emphasized that for a better understanding of the contemporary crisis of the Mexican State, the current increase in the use of State violence and the emergence of empower organised indigenous articulations it is necessary to take into account a new analytical framework that include the unfinished state formation process that in the past was compensated through the use of multiples control mechanisms and, at the same time, has given spaces to the existence of "indigenous discrete autonomies" and/or "private identities" that have been threatened by the State reformulation towards neoliberalism.

Therefore, the history of Mexican State formation cannot be understand just by corporatism or violence but by these wide variety of control mechanisms, as the next chapter analyses.

Chapter Two
Understanding the Mexican State Formation: From Hegemonic Domination to Violence

The current crisis of the Mexican State and its control mechanism stems from the way it was conceived by the elites and the historical process of its formation. This chapter is divided into two sections that correspond to the two key periods of the formation of the Mexican State. The first section covers the period between Independence and the emergence of the PRI (1821-1929).[51] The second period is known as the post-revolutionary period, and covers from 1929 to 1982, when a neo-liberal State model was adopted. The different State control mechanisms used by the governing elites to build the State and develop their economic model are highlighted in both periods together with the role that indigenous populations played in the State formation.

The First Attempt to Build the Mexican State: The Post-Independence Era (1821-1929)

In the case of Latin America,
there were no nations in search of states
but states in search of nations…
in which "imagined communities"
were imagined for and by the criollo elite.

Williem Assies 2001.[52]

Since its independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico was conceived of by a small *criollo* elite who decided that the main task of the State was to ensure continuity and expansion of a primarily export orientated economic model and maintain the hegemonic social system.

[51] The PRI had two different names in the past: its original name was the National Revolutionary Party (PNR). In 1936, during the government of General Cárdenas, the name was changed to PRM, the Party of the Mexican Revolution, and in 1946, it took its current name.
[52] Assies, W. (2002) Diversity, State and Democracy, paper discussed in the first regional workshop on development in Latin America sponsored by UNDP, San Salvador quoted in Ventura Patiño 2006:163.

This way the State was originally created following a logic that guaranteed "permanent capital accumulation and the conservation of privileges" (Bartra 1993:25). Therefore, emphasis was placed on State coercion, following the model that Charles Tilly called intense coercion (Tilly 1990), while little attention was placed on the process of creation and consolidation of governmental institutions which regulated the relationship between society and the state apparatus in order to achieve political legitimacy, social coercion and the emergence of a national inclusive identity (Centeno 2002).

Therefore, from the beginning the goal was to create a State that did not sacrifice the social and economic structures inherited from the colonial era (Tutino 1988:103). On the contrary, *criollos* and, later on, *mestizos* sought to own and exploit those structures for their own benefit. Consequently, the power transition did not transform the existing structures and control mechanisms, creating only a political revolution without a real social revolution (Manrique 2001:221). Thus, the emergence of a weak State that was unable to represent the interests of all its peoples.

In contrast with other Western European states, the process of building the Mexican State did not include wars between countries which were responsible for the consolidation of its governmental institutions. In fact, the State security apparatus did not focus on external defence, but on internal struggles and the elites thought the enemy was inside and came from below, especially from indigenous populations and the middle classes that challenged the *status quo* (Centeno 2002). Indigenous peoples were even considered as a threat to national security and as one of the biggest obstacles to the economic development of the State (Yashar 2005:287). They were forced into the ruling economic model when possible, and those who were not incorporated were pushed to the borderlands and marginalised

areas (Stavenhagen 1992:430; Mallon 2002; Stavenhagen 2002), also called refuge areas (Aguirre Beltrán 1967).

Due to the wide dispersion and disarticulation of indigenous peoples, there was no strong resistance to the existing discriminatory and excluding policies (Esteva 2001:122). Since colonial times, there were many different local indigenous uprisings against the abuse experienced under the system of exploitation, primarily regarding high taxes and tributes on income and goods (Guardino 1996:43). However, these were not revolutionary protests seeking to change the structures of oppression and exploitation. Most of the riots had specific aims and were short-lived due to either direct repression or the recognition on the part of the colonisers of the need to negotiate with rebel indigenous communities because they were the main source of agricultural resources, taxes and labour. Therefore, there was a huge interest in finishing with such riots and avoiding their spread to other communities (Greenberg 1989:182-3).

During the Mexican Independence rural rebellions and uprisings across the country were endemic (Katz 1988; Taylor 1988; Tutino 1988). The causes of the rebellions varied widely throughout time and space due to the great diversity of existing ethnic groups with different languages, cultures and traditions (Katz 1988:15). Hence, most of the indigenous and peasants' uprisings were relatively localised, sporadic and politically uncoordinated, with limited demands and objectives and did not pose a risk to the new State (Katz 1988:68; Taylor 1988:77; Tutino 1988:112; Guardino 1996:44).[53]

[53] Peter Guardino suggests that there was no indigenous cohesion or a significant ethnic inter-relationship, but identification with their own communities (Guardino 1996:43).

Immediately after Independence, and during most of the nineteenth century, there was a bloody civil war led by two elite groups competing to impose different State projects: the conservatives who favoured centralism, and the liberals who supported federalism (Rodriguez O 1989:9).[54] For historian Peter Guardino, many indigenous communities decided to actively participate in the civil war supporting the liberals as they interpreted and associated federalism with two of their main demands: local autonomy and the promise of land rights (Guardino 1996:44). Florencia Mallon agrees that different indigenous and peasant groups gave liberal principles a new sense of vigour and a new interpretation related to ethnic and social justice. Even liberal leader Juan Álvarez accepted this popular interpretation of liberal principles to generate much needed political and military support from this sector in order to consolidate regional and national alliances (Mallon 1995:312).

In this sense, as a political measure to guarantee the cooperation of indigenous communities, the liberals promised lands and full citizen rights to indigenous peoples in exchange for their services to "the nation" (Guardino 1996:83). However, as historian Eric van Young documented, there was no real ideological movement for land reform -neither before nor after Independence- designed to comprehensively resolve the issue of land distribution for the rural population. On the contrary, Van Young points out that there were completely opposite visions between the *criollo* leadership and the rural rebels -especially with regards to the perception of citizenship, autonomy and State power- which were doomed to conflict (Van Young 1993:257-8).

[54] The conservatives also favoured protectionism, the political intervention of the Catholic Church and were inspired by a colonial past. The liberals believed in free trade, private property, the elimination of special privileges or corporate rights and, at least rhetorically, favoured the expansion of citizens' rights (Centeno 2002: 63).

Finally, in 1867, the liberal elite defeated the conservatives and gained power over the Mexican State. Indigenous and peasant communities that had actively participated in the struggle demanded the liberals comply with their initial promises. However, the liberal government responded to those demands from rural movements with repression, initiating a systematic offensive against communities and old members of the Guardia Nacional (National Guard), mainly formed by indigenous peoples (Mallon 1995:159). All this caused riots to reach unprecedented levels of violence in the history of Mexico. One of the best known cases is the "war of castes" in Yucatán, where Mayan indigenous peoples who supported the liberals in exchange for the elimination of taxes and the acquisition of communal lands, violently rebelled when they realised that promises would not be kept, aiming at the "elimination of the whites".[55] There was a total war and, after years of conflict, the rebellion was repressed using all the forces of the State, mercenaries hired in the United States and private landowners' armies. The dimensions of this war were so grave that the population of the state of Yucatán was halved (Bazant 1991:27).

Subsequently, there was a constant fear amongst the dominating elite regarding a new war of castes. Authors such as Charles A. Hale suggest that despite the disagreement between the liberal and conservative elites on an economic and political model, there was a "mutual defence agreement" to avoid altering the established order and systematically repress any indigenous rebellion.[56] This way the elites maintained their unity to resist popular insurrections. However, once the war of castes was under control, none of the elites was strong enough to impose itself over the others, so the war continued (Centeno 2002:153).

[55] The war of castes started in 1847. However, its intensity was intermittent until the Revolution in 1910. The most intense period was between 1847 and 1854, and it took the shape of guerrilla resistance until 1901 (Montavo Ortega 1988:298-300).
[56] Charles A. Hale 1989, quoted by Mallon 1995:321.

Federalist liberals started building a liberal and positivist State once they settled in power. They were under the influence of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, the English and the French Revolutions and, subsequently, the American Revolution. Therefore, they decided to imitate the Unitarian State model[57] despite the great ethnic and cultural diversity in the country (Manrique 2001:230; Larrain 2004:22). However, this pretension faced the contradictions that stem from the prevailing social order which the power of the dominating elites was built upon. The elites were not willing to abandon their privileges, especially when the extension of civil rights would imply the eradication of colonial legacies that were still unresolved such as racism and ethnic discrimination (Kay 1989:71; Schelling 2001).[58]

This way the new liberal State made indigenous peoples and their diverse systems invisible and explicitly excluded them from the national project (Hale 1968:217; Stavenhagen 1992:425; van Cott 2000b:207; Stavenhagen 2002:26). This was clearly reflected in the first Mexican Constitution of 1824 in which there were certain socio-economic requirements to participate in political matters, which excluded indigenous peoples. For example, the right to vote was limited to literate home-owners but indigenous peoples were neither of those (Manrique 2001:221-4). Furthermore, there were laws to attract European immigrants, arguing that this would improve the racial composition of the population and thus the economic and political prospects of the new State (Bartra 1993:32; Larrain 2004:24).

[57] Unitarian State is a mono-legal system that proposes only one ethnic identity as a condition of complete national integration (Esteva 2001).
[58] Vivian Schelling suggests that in Latin America, it is still possible to find a colonial legacy and, despite all the transformations during Independence, social and economic relationships persist in the current context albeit reinvented (Schelling 2001).

The result of this period, known as *la Reforma*, was not a modern State based on the paradigm of Western Europe as expected. On the contrary, the liberal State was so weak both military and politically that it could not control huge areas of the national territory, giving the local elites firm autonomy in exchange for loyalty and national unity. Therefore, local elites became *de facto* authorities in their respective territories, filling the voids left by the State. This fostered the "*peripheralisation*" instead of centralisation of State power (Gledhill 1988:311-12; Centeno 2002:62).

Benito Juárez, one of the most important liberal presidents in Mexico (1867-1876), in his interest to centralise the power of the State and impose a modernising economic model, fostered the Reform laws, also know as *Leyes de Desamortización* in 1867. These laws supported the confiscation and privatisation of corporate properties, chiefly those that belonged to the Catholic Church and indigenous communities.[59]

As part of the liberal economic policy, these laws had two main objectives: on the one hand, capital accumulations and, on the other, the destruction of indigenous communities (Katz 1988:537; Tutino 1988:119). In the former, the liberation and mobilisation of land and those who lived on it, favoured the expansion of capitalism to the agricultural sector because the existing corporations restricted the penetration of commercial relationships in rural and indigenous communities (Bartra 1993:83). This aimed at engendering a deep change in how land and property were used, the abolition of traditional economies, expelling indigenous peoples from their lands to create an abundant free labour force, increased foreign investments, the creation of a rural middle class together with the

[59] The *Ley de Desamortización* fostered the privatisation of corporate lands because they were considered as being in "dead hands", refusing indigenous communities their right to collectively enjoy their lands and resources (Fernández 2004:57).

promotion of a significant foreigners immigration (Valdez 1998:10). All these measures were seen as necessary fuel for Mexican modernisation (Knight 1990:237).

In the latter, these laws would free the elites from pressures and resistance from indigenous peoples and peasants because getting these communities out of their lands would weaken their community solidarity, their social leaderships, thus avoiding future local rebellions. This way, the liberal economic ideology perfectly complimented the desire of the elites to weaken indigenous peoples and their systems (Tutino 1988:123).

The subsequent liberal regime led by General Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910) was characterised by the military orientated centralisation of the State, so it deepened the liberal policies of his predecessor. Díaz built an effective and powerful State based on two main pillars: economic growth and political stability protected by a vast coercive apparatus. The first pillar generated a significant accumulation of capital by the oligarchic landowners, whereas the second was achieved through a brutal repression carried out against all opposition as well as attractive incentives for local powerful elites, the middle classes, the Catholic church and the army in order to pacify them.[60]

One of the elements that enhanced the State and its coercive power was the building of a nationwide rail network that facilitated the rapid deployment of troops and a wider State presence in remote areas. However, the main purpose of the large rail system was the expansion of the economic model that was based on exporting primary goods which, in

[60] Díaz also managed to consolidate a system of domination and control that was based on personal alliances and commitments with the elites, exchanging loyalties for relative local autonomy (Negretto and Aguilar-Rivera 2000:391).

turn, was the basis for the monopoly of land and allowed the possibility of control over rural workers (Gledhill 1988:312).

Peasant and indigenous rebellions notably decreased during the *Porfirista* dictatorship due to the coercion exercised by the government more so than any political compromise or conciliation with rural groups (Katz 1988:11). The main exception was the resistance of the indigenous Yaquis in Sonora, located in the North of the country, which represented the biggest organised opposition to the control of the central regime. However, after many attempts at repression by the police and the army to subdue the Yaquis, in 1903 they were uprooted and forced to relocate in Yucatán (in the South of the Country) in order to displace them from their land and stifle their struggle (Hu-DeHart 1988:162-3).

One of the most important elements to understand the relative *pax porfiriana* at the rural level (apart from the effective mechanisms of State violence and its auxiliary forces led by the "*rurales*"[61]) was the expropriation of communal lands from indigenous peoples. This weakened their resistance affecting their capacities and the relative local autonomy that they had experienced during the *Repúblicas de Indios* in the Colonial period,[62] especially in the centre of Mexico where the influence and power of the State was stronger (Katz 1991:57; Fernández C 2004:57). Therefore, when Díaz left power in 1911, more than 90%

[61] The *rurales* were professional police bodies that functioned as auxiliary troops and were not directly subordinated to the army but under the control of President Díaz (Katz 1988; Katz 1991:85; Meyer 1992:92).
[62] The *Repúblicas de Indios* were administrative entities created by the Spanish during the Colonia. Their main function was to facilitate tax and tribute collection from the indigenous populations and keep direct control of the Spanish Crown over indigenous production. The Spanish Crown bestowed certain autonomy upon indigenous communities allowing them to keep their communal lands in exchange for the payment of tributes. This way, indigenous populations elected their community representatives who had political and economic power (Gledhill 1988:302-19). The government of Porfirio Díaz imposed official municipal authorities, which further weakened the biggest instrument for traditional social protest by indigenous local peoples: the community councils (Katz 1988:537).

of indigenous peoples did not have any land (Womack 1969; Katz 1991:94) while 75% of the usable land was owned by landowners (Beaucage 1998).[63]

In sum, the resistance of the governing liberal elites to making structural changes to the social relationship and the modes of production caused serious contradictions with the capitalist system. Together with the modernising trends of the country, there was an oligarchy that accumulated land and existed in an almost feudal form in relation to agricultural work relationships, supported by the repression of the dictatorship (Fernández C 2004:58). Therefore, in spite of the great investment in infrastructure with a view to economic modernisation that took place during the *Porfiriato*, rural Mexico could not be transformed to create a capitalist system of agricultural production. On the contrary, there were a massive number of dispossessed peasants who were reduced to labourers in haciendas, and vast unproductive lands remained in the hands of the landowning elite (Fernández C 2004:166).

The contradictions of the Mexican liberal model, the resistance of the elites and the popular resentment directed towards the State's policies of violence and social exclusion generated many local riots that culminated in the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). This Revolution included –as in the Independence movement- a high level of participation by indigenous peoples and peasants. However, it was also heterogeneous and asymmetrical. This can be explained by the great diversity of local initiatives, alliances and strategies that caused participation to vary considerably from region to region (Falcon 1988:418; Rodriguez O

[63] When Mexico achieved independence from Spain, approximately 40% of the workable land in the centre and south of the country was in the hands of the indigenous communities (Beaucage 1998). Williem Assies documented that by the end of 1910, 87% of the land was concentrated in the hands of around 8,500 *hacendados* (landowners) (Assies 2006).

1990:6). Nonetheless, violent expropriation of lands from indigenous communities was one of the fundamental causes of the wide and active indigenous participation in the Revolution (Bartra 1975:126; Katz 1988:535).

Therefore, the main revolutionary demand of peasants and indigenous peoples was the Land Reform, and they built different alliances with the urban bourgeoisies (Guardino 1996) and with different local caudillos.[64] One of the most relevant actors in the struggle for land and for peasant rights was Emiliano Zapata, who established the *Plan de Ayala* in 1911, which introduced a land devolution programme for land workers and the establishment of independence for peasant communities to govern their affairs according to their traditions.[65]

The Constitution of 1917 officially marked the end of the Revolution and the formal victory of the revolutionary principles. One such principle was that of Land Reform, which was included in Article 27 of the Constitution, which explains in detail the distribution of land through small private property and includes the most important revolutionary legacy: the *ejido*, or collective entities.[66] However, the first "revolutionary government" in power did not have a comprehensive programme for the implementation of land distribution and refused to apply the agreed structural reforms. Therefore, some of the leaders together with indigenous and peasant communities forcefully reclaimed their lands and took up arms.

[64] Caudillos were local regional leaders who led ideological, political or military movements in the post-Independence period.
[65] Zapata and his movement had a slogan throughout their revolutionary struggle: "Land and Freedom". This was a clear reference to their demands regarding the devolution and distribution of lands and self-determination of rural peoples in community matters (Palou 2006).
[66] The *ejido* is a small parcel of land that was originally owned by the Mexican State but could be used individually by peasants and indigenous peoples. Until the 1992 reforms, under Article 27 of the Constitution, the *ejido* could no officially be rented out or sold to individuals and external corporations (Bartra 1975:128; Greenberg 1989:172).

This was the case of Zapata in Morelos and later on the struggle was extended to the South Eastern states of the country such as Guerrero, Puebla, Estado de México and Oaxaca (Womack 1991). Nonetheless, the leaders were violently assassinated and their struggle was interrupted (Womack 1969; Warman 1988:335; Palou 2006).

Consequently, after a long and bloody revolution, the social, economic and political structures did not experience radical changes and did not significantly improve the living conditions of those who were part of it (Fernández C 2004:124). Many indigenous people had to wait several decades for the promises of the Revolution regarding land to be fulfilled (Wolf 1973:46).[67]

It is important to highlight that during the Revolution, the violent confrontation not only took place against the Díaz's regime but also amongst the different revolutionary factions in their struggle to acquire State power (Stevens 1979:251; Womack 1991:128). The final result was the triumph of a *mestizo* dynasty from Sonora that was interested in fostering capitalist development primarily focused on urban middle classes in the North of the country (Knight 1990:228). The victorious elite "institutionalised" the Revolution in the PRI through a political pact amongst the different revolutionary factions in order to solve their differences and avoid the use of violence (Meyer 1992:60). Subsequently, the leaders announced the end of the era of the caudillos and the beginning of the era of governmental institutions.

[67] For many indigenous people, these revolutionary victories did not come true until the government of General Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). However, as will be explained in later sections, the *ejido* favoured the dependence and subordination of the rural sector to the political and economic model of the post-revolutionary government led by the PRI.

Second Attempt to Build the Mexican State: The Post-Revolutionary Era (1929-1982)

At the end of the Revolution, the Mexican State collapsed (Knight 1999:108). The *Latifundista* model (Junker) was eliminated in order to facilitate the development of capitalism, and the *Latifundustas* as a class were displaced from power and were no longer the centre of the Mexican agricultural economy (Bartra 1975:126). Therefore, the new victorious elite tried to rebuild the State and foster a new route towards commercial industrial capitalism. The post-revolutionary period began and consolidated itself in 1929 with the creation of the PNR -the predecessor of the PRI- which functioned as State party (Meyer 2008).[68]

The predominant conception of the State by the post-revolutionary elite placed the State over society as the arbiter of different social sectors, at least according to the official discourse (Meyer 1991:227; Aitken 1996:28). For more than five decades in power the post-revolutionary elite played the main role of driving the economy and regulating the political and social life of the country (Mackinlay and Otero 2004:75). There were several periods in which fluctuations occurred in the level of intervention of the State in the economic development. However, the most intense period took place between 1940 and 1970, and was known as the Mexican Miracle.[69] Throughout these years, the governing elite adopted the Import Substitution Economic Model, demonstrating a strong commitment to fostering both a domestic market and an industrial expansion through subsidies and protectionist public policies.

[68] The PRI was intimately interlinked with the State. The government financed the party and the party provided politicians and officials for the federal and state governments, most of them elected by the president (Fidley 1996:717).

[69] During the Mexican Miracle, the economic growth of the country was a constant 6% annual, so despite the dominating authoritarianism, a relative political and social legitimacy was achieved as the governing elite had the resources to satisfy most of the demands of the corporate groups (Meyer 1992:113).

One of the main actions of the governing elite to rebuild the State was the centralisation of power. To achieve this, it used bureaucratic administrative institutions and exercised its monopoly of violence, especially at the national level. The latter was achieved through the subordination of the army to civilian powers and the achievement of regional pacts with regional elites. These actions gave the regime political and economic room for manoeuvre, which in turn allowed them to generate a wide repertoire of formal (legal) and informal (extra-legal) mechanisms of State control with which to support their modernising project in a country that was still predominantly agricultural.[70]

Hegemonic domination was one of the most relevant mechanisms originally used to build the post-revolutionary State. In stark contrast with the trend of exclusion in the post-Independence State, the new State apparatus was conceived as widely inclusive, integrationist and incorporative of all social sectors, and based on the nationalist revolutionary ideology (Stavenhagen 1992:425-9; Sieder 2002:188). This way the PRI positioned itself as the representative of the Revolution and its commitments. This became an important source of political legitimacy for the stability and cohesion of the system because it allowed to mobilize workers and peasants with the promise of socio-economic redistribution and social peace.

As part of its process of hegemonic domination and the incorporative policy, the governing elite promoted *mestizaje* as a project of national identity. This project combined the Spanish legacy with the indigenous pre-Hispanic inheritance. Nevertheless, although at a

[70] Authors such as Alan Knight point out that in 1929 almost 80% of the population was predominantly rural (Knight 1991:241-320).

symbolic discursive level indigenous peoples were included, in practice, the plan was to make them disappear through official indigenism.[71] The latter promoted paternalistic development policies intended to assimilate the indigenous identity with the *mestizo* identity through its Mexicanisation.[72] In this sense, just as during the liberal reformist era, a Unitarian State was being built. However, in this case, the *mestizo* race would be in charge of building the nation and driving the country towards modernity (Mallon 1995:283). Therefore, the new regime did not legally recognise indigenous peoples, with their languages and their forms of political and legal organisation, but simply incorporated them into a social class as peasants (Sieder 2002:188).

One of the most important factors for understanding the strength of the PRI and the political and social stability of the regime for more that 50 years is the efficacy of the corporatist system. The PRI, from the very beginning, successfully integrated all the relevant sectors of Mexican society into the State: workers in the CTM, peasants and indigenous peoples in the CNC and the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista*, INI (Indigenist National Institution) and popular organisations in the CNOP. Similarly, until 1946 the same was done to the military,[73] marginalising, excluding and skilfully manipulating their fragmentation at the same time.

In contrast to other authoritarian systems, the PRI accepted all the social and political groups in exchange for their subordination to its rules: indigenous peoples had to relinquish their identity in order to be integrated as peasants and Mexicanise themselves; workers had

[71] Antonio Caso, the first director of the INI, suggested that the "indigenous issue" would be solved in twenty years with the gradual disappearance of native groups (Montemayor 2003).
[72] Knight 1990, quoted in Sieder 2002:190-1.
[73] In 1938, the military sector became part of the corporate system of the PRI until 1946 when the first civil post-revolutionary president was appointed (López Gallo 1976:505; Camp 2005:Xi).

to renounce their organisational freedom in order to get governmental benefits; peasants had to join the party through the CNC in order to acquire land supplies from the government, and so on.

Therefore, the corporate system had a double function: on the one hand, it controlled the different sectors through official unions and, on the other, it hampered the interaction between the different sectors (Wiarda and Kline 2006:141). Hence, the PRI tried to avoid at all costs autonomous political and social mobilisations, and sought to deactivate independent movements and their leaders. Likewise, it contributed to the social depoliticisation, a phenomenon that was also favoured by the self-censorship of the mass media and their submission to the official party.[74] As a result, the corporate system worked as an ideal political arrangement to support the authoritarian model and maintain control over the social tensions that stem from the transition from an agro-exporting economy to an industrialised one without any significant interruptions or threats (Gledhill 1988:318).

It was not until well into the 1970s that autonomous organisations and movements of Mexican civil society started to emerge (Beaucage 1998:4). This situation was a consequence of the economic deceleration, the weakening of the clientelistic system and the first signs of the PRI's limited ability to govern.

As previously noted, the post-revolutionary regime was characterised by the informality or extra-legality of its actions, especially through its use of unwritten pacts, loyalty networks,

[74] In 1935, the federal government created the *Productora e Importadora de Papel, Sociedad Anónima PIPSA* (Paper Producer and Importer Company) in order to manage the imports and distribution of the paper necessary for the publication of newspapers and magazines. Therefore, it was almost impossible to publish independent editions without the "authorisation" of the government (Stevens 1979:43; Stolle- McAllister 2005:34).

the meta-constitutional powers of the executive, hidden rules, the clientelistic system and the actions of the *caciques* and intermediaries, amongst others (Pansters 1999:252). Even formal entities such as the PRI, the army and the judiciary system exerted control with a subtle dose of informal mechanisms. Actually, control over different ideological trends and social sectors was achieved thanks to the effective contribution of formal mechanisms (such as the integration of such sectors within the structure of the party), alongside informal mechanisms (co-option, corruption, clientelistic relationships, and coercion, amongst others).

Informal control mechanisms were effective while there were resources to satisfy the material and symbolic demands of the leaders and their followers in exchange for subordination to the authority and to the written and unwritten rules of the PRI. This allowed the party to turn into a political and coercive machinery for solving conflicts and pacifying the country. Therefore, the legitimacy of the system was not achieved through democratic mechanisms but through the governmental efficiency in managing corporate relationships and contradictions (Meyer 1992:136).

In order to maintain its conciliatory image, the regime preferred to use informal control mechanisms to face the opposition instead of directly applying State force. However, those who refused to tow the line or demobilise were subject to threats and other forms of hostility such as open repression (Middlebrook 1986:125). Human Rights Watch points out that there was a wide repertoire of tools of intimidation against independent leaders that ranged from "amicable reprimands" from government officials to incarceration and, in extreme cases, the use of physical violence or assassinations (Watch/Americas 1993:5). Rodolfo Stavenhagen adds that when the party's manipulation or cooption mechanisms

failed to control the actors or independent organisations, the government sought any possible means of eliminating the threat to both the monopoly of power the party exercised and the economic stability of the country.[75]

In sum, the great success of the PRI and its corporative system was that for more than five decades it was able to lead the country towards a "formal peace",[76] since it understood and channelled the main demands of wide sectors of the populations that were organised under its command. Thus, without substantially altering the socio-economic structures, it managed to maintain the balance between contradictions and demands of the system albeit without solving them (Cano and Cisneros 1980:133).

The Rural Level: The Biggest Pillar of the Stability and Formal Peace under the PRI

At the urban level, the system of incorporating social sectors was significantly consolidated through the widest possible penetration and systematic control of the State. In contrast, at the rural level, where official and institutional organisms had an uneven presence, mechanisms of incorporation were less efficient. In this context, the governing elite therefore used a wide repertoire of additional control mechanisms. These included formal and informal interventions by official bodies, such as the CNC, and governmental institutions, such as the INI, in addition to the intermediation and coercion of local caciques as well as overlooking acts of violence exerted by irregular armed groups.

[75] Rodolfo Stavenhagen, "Un modelo para el estudio de las organizaciones políticas en México", Revista Mexicana de Sociología 29, No.2 (April-June 1967): 335-6, quoted in Stevens 1970:71.
[76] Jenny Pearce develops a concept of formal peace regarding conflicts in Central America and argues that even when the armed conflict is officially over and there has been a ceasefire, most of the population lives a daily violence that is expressed through exclusion, poverty and the violation of their rights (Pearce 1998).

As previously mentioned, the main corporate clientelistic apparatus at the rural level was the CNC, which was complimented by the INI in 1948. The CNC was in charge, amongst other things, of political and electoral control of peasants to pacify them and avoid any movement towards independent organisation or exert any pressure on the regime (Warman 1973:106; Jones 1996:188).

The CNC was the most subordinated and weakest organism of the Mexican political system (Cano and Cisneros 1980:151; Meyer 1992:72; Bartra 1993:). It even represented the sector with the least political influence within the PRI since peasants stopped being important for the industrialisation model implemented by the regime. However, this confederation was still key for the system because it guaranteed the "green vote" and the designation of *comisarios ejidales* (*ejido* commissioners) and *comisarios de bienes comunales* (communal goods' commissioners) in order to keep control and stability in rural areas (Amnesty International 1986:15).

In this sense, the CNC functioned as an efficient political electoral machine (Fox 1994:154). Independent social organisations and opposition political parties have denounced CNC members for repeatedly committing electoral fraud in favour of the PRI. This ranged from the co-option of voters to the use of violence to steal and destroy electoral material (Convergencia 1992).

The clientelistic rural system was mainly based on the Land Reform, especially on the supplies for the *ejidos* and other governmental resources for the countryside. This established the main mechanism for control and subordination of a wide group of indigenous peoples and peasants in the CNC and turned them into "the most docile clients

of the official party" until well into the 1970s (Smith 1991:313). Therefore, rural people were the most vulnerable to States coercive sanctions when they expressed their unhappiness with, or opposition to, the system and their needs made them especially dependent upon clientelistic incentives (Fox 1994:153).

At the beginning of the post-revolutionary era, the *ejido*'s primary political function was the pacification and stabilisation of the country (Werner T. 1988:497; Mackinlay and Otero 2004:75-81).[77] It was not until the government of president Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) was established, that there was a structural change in the Mexican agricultural system: the process of land distribution was accelerated and the *ejido* was considered an instrument of economic development and rural transformation (Brandenburg 1964:345; Knight 1991:216). However, as soon as Cárdenas' regime finished, local *caciques* orchestrated a land contra-reform. They considered their interests to be threatened by the expropriations carried out by the government, so they decided to oppose the new federal government and, in some cases, they armed themselves in order to terrorise political leaders who were acting against their interests by demanding lands. They even destroyed some *ejidos* and attacked government representatives who worked on the Land Reform (Werner T. 1988:506).

During the regime of Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) interrupting the Land Reform in some regions was justified by the argument that "dividing large swathes of land would negatively impact upon agricultural production in an era when food security was vulnerable due to the Second World War" (Greenberg 1989:97). The next president, Miguel Alemán

[77] For authors such as Horacio Mackilan and Gerardo Otero the *ejidos* had a political more than an economic objective (Mackilan y Otero 2004:57-81). For Roger Bartra, the *ejido* did not allow the de-peasantisation, so peasants continued producing for the market under non-capitalist conditions. The *ejido* was left out of the market by law and the clientelistic relationships did not respond to market mechanisms but to political relationships (Bartra 1993).

(1946-1952), modified article 27 of the Constitution to introduce the "*amparo agrario*" (land protection) to prevent the expropriation of land to the large landowners and widen the limits of small property, which generated abuse and manipulations by big landowners who wanted to protect their lands (Bartra 1975:141; Greenberg 1989:121).

As a final result, the Land Reform measure was not effective or simply did not even reach whole regions of the country because landowners and local politicians joined forces with PRI officials and managed to delay the implementation of the corresponding law, or manipulated it so that is was rendered invalid in their regions (Greenberg 1989:193; Watch/Americas 1997:32).[78]

In addition, the land reform remained unfinished as a response to the political pressure from the dominating groups and because in the states of the South East of the country indigenous and peasant organisations were not adequately organised or were victimised by co-option and/or threats by the local *caciques* (Cano and Cisneros 1980:141).

In sum, during the post-revolutionary period, the peasant mobilisations -both official and independent-, were local, spontaneous and desperate rather than articulated, and lacked a direction and objective. Their leadership was circumstantial, improvised and under-representative (Cano and Cisneros 1980:153; Eckstein 1983:203). Therefore peasant organisations did not articulate a movement that transcended the regional level nor did it build alliances with other sectors or classes (Meyer 1992:73).

[78] Pierre Beaucage argues that the land reform measures never took place in the rural areas of the North of the country where there are big cattle ranches, in the South East where there are coffee farms and in the main agricultural areas (Beaucage 1998). In the case of Chiapas, the "certificates of inalienability" issued in 1934 by the local state allowed *rancheros* and landowners to keep their lands (Watch/Americas 1997:32; Mackindlay 2004:294).

The INI: The Official Attempt to Mexicanise Indigenous Peoples

The National Indigenous Institution was created in 1948 as a presidential institution that provided services to indigenous peoples and gradually became a organism of economic development that was subordinated to the clientelistic system of the PRI (Fox 1994:170).[79]

Since its origin, the INI was in charge of implementing State policies regarding indigenous peoples. Such policies were characterised by being vertical, paternalistic, assistentialist and corporatist (Hernández, Paz et al. 2004). As previously mentioned, this institute was conceived by the State in order to give continuity to governmental efforts to Mexicanise and "*aculturizar"* indigenous peoples (Gutiérrez Chong 2004:46).

For more than fifty years, indigenous participation in the policies of the INI was low profile or they collaborated as consultants or executors of governmental policies dictated from above by *mestizos* (Fox 1994:71; Hernández, Paz et al. 2004:11).[80] For authors like James Greenberg, there was a general lack of confidence in the INI amongst indigenous communities because it was seen as an institution primarily dominated by *mestizos* and largely influenced by the PRI (Greenberg 1989:9). Nevertheless, Jonathan Fox argues that the institute was not a uniform organism but was divided into three main factions which shaped the policies related to indigenous peoples: an authoritarian faction chiefly linked to the PRI and the local elites; a semi-clientelistic faction that opposed the domination of local elites without fully supporting the independence of indigenous groups and their demands;

[79] For a deep study on indigenism please read Sámano, Miguel Ángel (2004). El indigenismo institucionalizado en México (1936-2000): Un análisis. Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo. Chilpancingo.
[80] An example of this situation is that it was only until 2000 when the first indigenous director of the INI was appointed, Marcos Matías. He stayed only one year in this post (Nahmand 2004:87).

and a pluralist faction that supported the process of formation of autonomous organisations and the promotion of indigenous rights (Fox 1994:170).

One of the greatest challenges of the pluralist faction of the INI regarding the implementation of rural development programmes was the harassment and constant pressure of local *caciques*. In a study of clientelism and citizenship in Mexico, Fox evidences how different governmental funds destined to indigenous peoples were at risk due to threats from the local authoritarian elites and members of the CNC. Both the elites and the CNC members considered the actions of the INI as a violation of their authority and as interference with the management of governmental resources assigned to them. Furthermore, indigenous organisations that received those direct benefits also challenged traditional power capitalising on the autonomy they acquired. In consequence, some reformist members of the INI were harassed and even incarcerated by local governments because they tried to develop projects with the indigenous organisations independently.[81] In this way, the elites of the states managed to hinder or stifle the process of autonomy that the federal government tried to implement from above amongst peasants and indigenous peoples. As a result, in some regions there were only incomplete or semi-clientelistic processes of rural development (Fox 1994:175-77).

As explored in the following chapters, the indigenist policies failed due to a combination of different factors: a) the incomplete or uneven presence of different governmental institutions in predominantly indigenous areas; b) the resistance of local elites to the implementation of federal public policies that affected their power and resources; and c) the

[81] Jonathan Fox documents cases in the state of Oaxaca in which federal governmental brigades were expelled by the state government due to the pressure exerted by local elites that felt that their political and commercial monopolies were under threat (Fox 1994:163).

failure of assimilation policies designed to create a unique national identity. The latter was due to the fact that some indigenous peoples maintained and even strengthened the relationship with their territory, language, social organisation and governmental structures - although in a subordinate and discrete way- amongst other cultural elements that differentiate them from the predominant *mestizo* culture. In some regions, this allowed them to create semi autonomous spaces that have survived and generated important cultural resistances (Otero 2004:224; Ventura Patiño 2006a:163).

Authoritarian Sub-national Regimes: *Caciques* or Local Political Bosses

The existence of local *caciques* has been a characteristic of the history of rural violence in Mexico.[82] They have been known by different names: local elites, political bosses, *rancheros* and agrarian bourgeoisie, amongst others.

Pablo González Casanova defines the *cacique* as "the Señor", the owner of the lands, lives and destinies of those who live there. The *cacique* is the most powerful man in his region even more powerful than any other governmental institution.[83]

The strengthening of local elites or *caciques* in Mexico was favoured by two main factors. Firstly, the difficult topography of the country created natural barriers for national integration and favoured the regionalisation of the country. Likewise, it limited the capacity

[82] The existence of caciques can be traced to the pre-Hispanic and colonial eras in Mexico. Colonial authorities used the term *cacique* in order to refer to the indigenous leaders they interacted with. During the nineteenth century, the term was used by military local chiefs who exerted control over a town or a region. The weakening of the State, the chaos left by the Independence and the constant struggle for power between the elites left many power voids in the periphery of the country. Regional caciques took advantage of this and demanded support for peasants to fight with them in their many personal conflicts in exchange of protection and resources. Some caciques even formed their own armies (Katz 1988:525; Meyer 1992:29).
[83] Pablo González Casanova (1967) La democracia en México, quoted in Salmeron 2002:20.

of the central government to reinstate order and unity by itself. Secondly, those natural obstacles were reinforced by the regimes' political decisions that gave *caciques* the power of intermediation in far away isolated territories in order to guarantee the control and the acquisition of resources of the weak central power (Brading 1980:1-16; Rodriguez O 1989:2).

The *caciques* and their local power have experienced considerable transformations over time, particularly due to the penetration of the market economy and the increased presence of the State –through its bureaucracy- in rural communities. However, there are still acting as political and economic intermediaries, and facilitated State control, in some regions (Salmerón Castro 2002:43-4).

In economic terms, the *caciques* have had a key function in their respective regions as commercial intermediaries, especially during the period in which capitalism began to penetrate the agro-commercial sector and particularly in those regions where non-capitalist forms of production predominated. In this way, the *caciques* tied the production of the countryside to the national market and acted as intermediaries between the industry and agriculture (Paré 1975:35-7).

In political terms, the *caciques* have been described as intermediaries or political brokers who establish links between peasant communities and the national political system (Wolf 1973). Particularly during the process of formation of the Mexican State, the *caciques* contributed to the integration of the political system as a fundamental part of the clientelistic system, hence their political power (Salmerón Castro 2002:41-3). Likewise, the *caciques* have guaranteed the national political elite local control, and, in exchange, they

have gained economic support and blank cheques for the management of regional affairs (Beaucage 1998).

A new kind of *caciques* emerged after the Revolution, and their legitimacy was maintained partly thanks to their participation in the restitution of lands to the communities through the Land Reform in the 1930s. This gave them power and control over peasant and indigenous peoples (Werner T. 1988:513; Bartra 1993:121).[84] Over time, the function of the *caciques* became institutionalised because they were less closely linked with the armed struggle, and their power grew based on the strengthening of their links with the PRI structure (Jacobs 1982:137).

One of the main strengths of the PRI in the partial consolidation of the post-revolutionary State was precisely its capacity and coercive ability to gradually remove or discipline the different caudillos and local elites under their central power (Eckstein 1983:201; Werner T. 1988:504). To a certain extent, the *Pax Priísta* was achieved thanks to an "agreement to share power" between the PRI and the regional elites, in which the latter agreed to submit to presidential power in exchange for political inclusion and an important share of the economic benefits of the system (Baer 1999; Lawson 2000:269).

In many rural regions in the country, the power of the *caciques* stemmed from a complex system of *compadrazgo*, favours, threats or some other form of coercion or violence against the opposition but, above all, from their personal connections with the PRI leadership and the clientelistic relationships that they established in order to attain legitimacy and control

[84] Paul Friedrich (1968) The legitimacy of a cacique. Local-level politics: Social and cultural perspectives. M.J. Swartz. Chicago, IL, Aldine, quoted in Villareal 2002.

amongst their subordinates. In other words, the power of the *caciques* was based on controlling the means of violence and the different governmental resources in their regions (Beaucage 1998; Villarreal 2002).

Armed civil groups and irregular forces have been intimately related with the phenomenon of rural *caciques* in Mexico. They have a long history and have been known under different names,[85] but they share common characteristics such as their civilian nature, their role in the protection of particular interests, the lack of public accountability for their actions and the use of arms to commit violent actions (threatening or eliminating individuals considered as subversive), amongst others. In some cases, it has been reported that they acted in conjunction with, or with the complicity of, regular forces, governmental authorities or members affiliated with the PRI (Amnesty International 1986:20; Watch/Americas 1997:1-2). There are civil armed groups that have received training, arms and logistical support from them. In other cases, they have been allowed to operate in different towns or territories (Amnesty International 1986:13; CIEPAC 1997; Watch/Americas 1997:43; Amnesty International 1998; Centro de Derechos Humanos "Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" 1998).

As previously noted, the links between different governmental institutions and landowners or *caciques* vary from region to region and time to time. However, the presence of these groups increases during electoral periods and in communities where there are larger autonomous organisations that demand land rights and take autonomous decisions (Wager and Schulz 1994:5). In electoral periods, violence increases notably as social and political

[85] Some of the most common terms are *guardias blancas* (white guards), *pistoleros* (gunmen), *sicarios* (hired men), self-defense forces, civilian patrols, death squadrons and paramilitaries amongst others.

alliances are redefined and the privileges of local traditional powers are endangered (Villarreal 2002).

The term "paramilitary" has been consistently avoided by the Mexican government that only refers to them as "illegal civil armed groups". This governmental attitude has given way to what Human Rights Watch describes as "plausible deniability" in State intervention or responsibility regarding the acts committed by these armed groups. However, in reality this is a way to avoid disturbing the legitimacy of institutions and the reputation of the State regarding human rights otherwise the government would have to be accountable both nationally and internationally (Watch/Americas 1997).

Apart from what has been analysed so far, the post-revolutionary regime used other formal control mechanisms, such as action on the part of the army and the discretional manipulation of State laws. Both mechanisms have subtly worked together with other informal methods discussed below.

The Mexican Army: The Silent Companion in the Formal Post-Revolutionary Peace

The centralisation of the State was partially achieved though the progressive subordination of the army to the civil authorities. Since its creation, the army has operated as the "silent partner" of the governing elite. Its actions have been crucial to ensuring the political stability of the country, especially through openly fighting what they consider subversive movements, repressing local opposition and maintaining the public order.

The Mexican army has its origins in the Mexican Revolution. Prior to this, there were irregular forces that lacked discipline and were under the control of local caudillos (Meyer 1992:29; Centeno 2002:66). Its revolutionary origins provided the army with a degree of prestige for many years, but it also established the military as being closely linked with the PRI. Its consolidation and professionalisation was part of the same process of institutionalisation that made the governing elite build the official party in the 1930s.

There are multiple facts that demonstrate this strong link. One of the principle ones is the incorporation of the military sector within the corporate body of the party during the administration of General Lázaro Cárdenas in 1938. It is also interesting to note that between 1946 and 1964, four army generals led the PRI (Camp 1999:90). Political scientist Adolfo Aguilar Zinser once suggested that "until 2000 the army was the armed branch of the PRI" which promoted the use of the military institution to achieve party aims.[86] There are substantial evidences that the PRI regime used the armed forces to control social mobilisations that were out of governmental control. In this sense, the army has been responsible for multiple actions that range from armed interventions in order to remove opposition community leaders, to the recent dismantling of autonomous municipalities in the South East of the country.[87]

In 1946, the government of Miguel Alemán, the first civil government since the Revolution, established an *unwritten civil-military agreement* in which the absolute respect of the military institution towards the civil authority and vice versa were accepted. Since

[86] Aguilar Zinser, Adolfo "Las relaciones cívico-militares en México" in Goldman, Louis et al. El Nuevo Estado Mexicano (Vol. II: Estado y Política), Nueva Imagen, México 1992, quoted in Global Exchange 2001.
[87] For a review on the different military interventions against social movements, please read Camp, R. (2005) Mexico´s military on the democratic stage, Washington, Praeger Publishers; and López-Montiel, A. (2000) "The military, political power, and police relations in Mexico City, Latin American Perspective, 27 (111).

then, apart from a real subordination of the military apparatus to the civil power, the regime and the PRI were careful over their relationship with the army and how they used it (Eckstein 1983; Centeno 2002). So far, the Mexican army has only acted when the government has declared that there is an internal or external threat to public order. However, the perception of a threat or violent acts has been conveniently manipulated by the government to criminalise protests and social mobilisations, variously projecting them as rebellion, terrorism, organised crime or drug trafficking, an approach which has been useful in justifying the intervention of the army "in defence of the legal order".[88]

When the army was publicly employed, the PRI justified the public use of the army as a political decision to re-establish the order, social peace and political stability. One of the most paradigmatic cases was the official justification for the actions of the army during the students' massacre of 1968. The senate, with a PRI majority, publicly applauded the military intervention as a means to "protect not only the lives and tranquillity of Mexican citizens, but also the integrity of Mexican institutions" (Stevens 1979:206).

The Discretional Use of Law to Inhibit Social Mobilisation

Another formal mechanism of the regime devised to exert political and social control was the laws that inhibited social mobilisation. An example of such laws is the la *Ley de Disolución Social* (Law of Social Dissolution) known as the anti-subversive law that

[88] The army has three main functions according to its rules: DN-I Defense of the National Sovereignty from external threats, DN-II defence of the legal order and internal peace, DN-III support to the population in case of natural disasters (Camp 2005:100).

entered into force in 1941 as part of the Federal Penal Code.[89] Article 145 of this law defines the events that the Mexican State considered as a threat to the government or the stability of the political system:

> *Article 145: From two to twelve years in prison and a fee of between one thousand and ten thousand pesos will be paid by a foreign or Mexican national, who orally or in a written form or any other means carries out political propaganda amongst foreigners or Mexican nationals, spreading ideas, programmes or any other forms of action from a foreign government that can alter public order or affect the sovereignty of the Mexican State […]*
>
> *Public order is understood to be altered when the actions specified in the previous paragraph tend to cause rebellion, sedition, disturbances, riots […]*

The law was written in a way that provided the government broad powers to punish groups or individuals who participated in strikes and other actions that could be included under the vague classification of sabotage. Therefore, the laws were seen as a weapon against workers and the opposition. Some critics were convinced that the law allowed the government to incarcerate those individuals seen as leaders of opposition movements or strikes for long periods of time (Stevens 1970:65). [90]

This law was abolished in 1970. However, some of its articles were included in the new penal code and the sentences were increased, without sacrificing its efficacy in inhibiting social mobilisation (Stevens 1979:218).

The Mexican government has historically refused to accept the presence of guerrilla groups on its territory so there are no articles or military policies specifically referring to the counter-insurgent struggle, and other legal mechanisms have been implemented to deal

[89] The Law of Social Dissolution has its origins in the era of the Second World War as a tool of the regime to avoid actions from supporters of the Axis alliance in the country. However, when the war was over, instead of eliminating this law it was modified in order to "impede communist activities" (Stevens 1970:64).

[90] In 1961, two key leaders of the railway strike were incarcerated under the Law of Dissolution and its clause on sabotage. In addition, the teachers' strike was dispersed, its leaders were arrested and prosecuted on the charge of participating in a conspiracy to overthrow the government through the use of arms (Stevens 1970:65-7).

with those groups considered "outside the law". This is the case with the previously mentioned law and the *Ley Federal de Armas de Fuego y Explosivos* (Federal Law of Weapons and Explosives) -applied in the case of possession of illegal weapons- and several other articles of the Penal Code which punish individuals conspiring to rebel.[91]

Traditionally, the Mexican government has demonstrated a consistent tendency to perceive any autonomous movement or opposition group as subversive and, therefore, a threat to the established equilibrium of the political system. However, a particular animosity towards the left was revealed and the different laws were applied to members of the left with more frequency (Stevens 1970:67).

The Beginning of the Crisis of the Post-Revolutionary State

For more than five decades, the PRI enjoyed a degree of political legitimacy that stemmed from its social and revolutionary origins. However, the students' massacre of 1968 evidenced the initial crisis in the political system and its economic model (Knight 2002). This event provided early indicators of the PRI's limited ability to govern and forced a policy of open repression against the sectors that were not effectively integrated into the corporate apparatus.[92] Additionally, at the end of the 1960s, the first effects of the economic slow-down began to manifest, causing a decrease in the resources for the maintenance of the clientelistic system. This generated the gradual erosion of Mexican authoritarianism and its control mechanisms (Middlebrook 2004:17).

[91] This instrument was the basis for the sentence against those prosecuted in the military clash between the army, peasants and members of the EPRI guerrilla in the community of Charco- Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero, in 1998 (Watch/Americas 2001).

[92] Previously with the government oppression of the railway movement of 1958 and the physicians movement in 1965 the beginnings of the crisis were evident and the first actions against autonomous and opposition sectors began.

The open use of violence on the part of the Mexican State against social and independent leaders, but especially against left wing ones, caused the emergence of the main urban and rural guerrilla movements[93] in several states of the country. This generated a strong perception of lack of governance and instability of the PRI regime.

As a consequence of the crisis of legitimacy and due to the strong critiques both at the national and the international level because of the use of violence, the regime decided to adopt different mechanisms of control in order to "accommodate without yielding its power" (Fox 1994:159). In this fashion, it applied a two-pronged military strategy that was both direct[94] and indirect[95] -with irregular armed groups- against its opponents throughout what was known during the 1970s as the Dirty War. This was applied all around the country but it had a higher impact on the state of Guerrero.

In parallel, the regime carried out political concessions for social and political opponents in order to regain legitimacy and channel the citizens' discontent in an institutional manner. One such concession was the creation of the electoral law of 1976 that opened spaces for political opposition parties and for a higher proportion of representatives in the *Congreso de la Unión* (Chamber of Deputies) (Middlebrook 1986:123).[96] Nevertheless, some critics

[93] The most important guerrilla movement at the urban level were the *Liga 23 de Septiembre* (League of the 23rd of September), in the Distrito Federal, and at the rural level, those led by Lucio Cabañas and Genáro Vázquez in the mountains of Guerrero. For more information on armed movements in Mexico, please refer to Castellano, Laura (2007). Mexico armado, 1943-1981. México, Era.

[94] In 1974, a third of the Mexican army was deployed in the state of Guerrero in order to eliminate the guerrilla movement led by Lucio Cabañas and Genáro Vázquez (Eckstein 1983: 212; Castellano 2007; Montemayor 1991).

[95] In the 1970s, as part of the governments strategy to safeguard the image of the army, a covert war was endorsed through the use of irregular forces formed by military personnel or selected civilians called the *Batallón Olimpia* comprised of the White Brigades and the Falcons (Camp 2005:32).

[96] For the first time electoral participation of the Mexican Communist was permitted (Panster 1999:247; Olvera 2004: 413).

argue that this "State reform" was not significant for a real political process and worked as a means of easing the pressure and channelling the discontent and lack of space for new social and political actors (Pansters 1999:247). In other words, "it managed to channel the energy of the opposition through the electoral process instead of the guerrilla option" (Meyer 1992:72). All this avoided or delayed the opposition's decision to use violence as a method of furthering their political and social struggle for many decades, but it did not generate changes in the authoritarian structure of power.

Similarly, at the rural level at the beginning of the 1970s, the federal government designated a group of reformists to promote different programmes for rural development. This would be useful to the regime in the creation of alternative channels of interaction with the rural population in order to free themselves from the highly expensive and inefficient mediation of the *caciques*. To these ends, they decided to promote the direct and focused delivery of government resources through the *Programas de Inversión para el Desarrollo Rural*, PIDER (Investment Programmes for Rural Development) and other similar programmes to stifle the "red spots" of discontent and social desperation.[97] Government reformists even accepted and, in some cases, promoted an increase in the autonomy of the rural organisations. However, federal policies only partially succeeded because they faced opposition and violence from some PRI sectors, local authorities and *caciques* (Fox 1994:160-3).

Nonetheless, these reforms generated small cracks in the system, which some independent social and political organisations exploited to advance their negotiating position and

[97] Other similar federal programmes generated the creation of governmental institutions such as Conasupo, Inmecafé, Fonart and others, trust agreements to foster rural development and other entities in order to avoid intermediaries (Fox 1994:163).

dialogues with the State (Fox 1994:177). It was in the mid-1970s and the early 1980s when these organisation in the Centre and South East of Mexico openly opposed the control exerted by the CNC and the PRI (Amnesty International 1986:15; Fernández C 2004:61; Mackinlay 2004:291). An example of this is the emergence of the *Coalición de Obreros, Campesinos y Estudiantes del Itsmo*, (Coalition of Workers, Peasants and Students of the Isthmus) *Coalición Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos*, CIOAC (Independent Coalition of Agricultural Workers and Peasants) in 1975 and the *Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala*, CNPA (The National Plan de Ayala Coordinating Committee) in 1976 and other similar peasant organisations.

Many of these organisations competed in the local elections through opposition political parties and acted as direct representatives of their communities before State institutions (Fernández C 2004:61). Likewise, some of them carried out campaigns for the recuperation, expropriation, distribution and defense of the land, and, in many cases, they tried to democratise community affairs. However, many of their leaders were victimised by different forms of violence that were mainly committed by armed civilians allegedly in collaboration with local authorities. Crimes against rural leaders did not cause high numbers of fatalities individually, they were "isolated" incidents which persisted for many years cumulatively causing many deaths (Amnesty International 1986:5-15).

With regards to the indigenous peoples, the INI created supreme indigenous councils in 1974 for each of the ethnic groups in Mexico –identified by language- in order to articulate their interests and provide them with a higher level of representation through the PRI. Likewise, in 1975 the *Consejo Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas*, CNPI (National Council of Indigenous Peoples) was created to unify the supreme councils across the country (Dietz

2004:44). The CNPI was designed to avoid the radicalisation of indigenous peoples and to stop organisations from going over the permitted organisation limits established by the State (Sarmiento 1985:205). Therefore, with time it became "the indigenous branch of the PRI" (Hernández C. 2006:120).

In some regions the supreme indigenous councils were reclaimed and their significance renewed by community organisations as instruments for facilitating economic support from the government and to develop productive projects (Zárate 2003:13). In some periods, even some groups rebelled against the CNPI and the PRI. However, they were subordinated to the government party in the end, becoming a corporate organisation once again (Sarmiento 1985:214).

Social researcher Armando Bartra has clearly summarised the drama of rural organisations during the post-revolutionary period: "Sadly many independent peasant organisations have played a very important role in the mobilisation of peasants and indigenous peoples, but none of them have survived their incorporation under government organisations nor the death of their leaders" (Bartra 2004:18).

CONCLUSIONS

There have been important similarities and differences in the two previous attempts to build the Mexican State. Regarding the similarities, during the post-Independence and post-revolutionary periods the process of State formation remained unfinished, due to the partial centralisation and "*civilianisation"* of the State power.

In relation to the partial centralisation of power, the different regimes did not manage to maintain the monopoly of violence nor the total control of the national territory. The uneven presence of the State allowed the existence of semi-autonomous spaces and/or authoritarian enclaves where the local elites that were tied to the old regime exercised the monopoly over violence in order to defend their privileges and favour an uneven distribution of economic resources in their respective regions. In both historical periods, the national governing elites entered into pacts with the local elites in order to govern in exchange for important social and economic concessions. This obstructed the democratisation and the modernisation of the country.

Moreover, due to the partial *civilianisation* of power, political and social institutions of the State that were in charge of the systematic negotiations and the interactions with the citizens did not manage to establish a democratic relationship with them that was based on consensus and full legitimacy. During the post-Independence period, a minority governing elite built an excluding and authoritarian State that did not place any importance on this aspect and focused on guaranteeing the success of the agro-export model, strengthening the repressive apparatus.

During the post-revolutionary regime, the elite created an inclusive yet authoritarian State. Through the bureaucratic-coercive machinery of the PRI, the elite managed to regulate from above the relationship between the State and society, using a wide range of formal and informal control mechanisms. This way, it managed to maintain the social stability and the political legitimacy required in the country. However, as soon as the economic and political models drifted into crisis in the 1970s, the federal resources used to maintain the

clientelistic system decreased and so did the ability of the State to mobilise, represent and control society.

One of the main differences between the two attempts at State formation is that the post-revolutionary regimes achieved the subordination of the military apparatus to the civilian power, which helped them partially consolidate the State. However, the crisis of the State, along with the gradual restriction of its functions and the weakening of its different control mechanisms, generated a significant power vacuum, lack of control, disorder and violence. The local elites together with the *caciques* and irregular armed groups took advantage of these situations in order to keep functioning, and at the same time, the regime justified increased army activity to maintain public order and social peace. Therefore, it could be said that this crisis gave way to the remilitarisation of the policies and security of the State and that "*civilianisation* of power" that was partially achieved in the post-revolutionary era is being lost.

Regarding indigenous peoples, both attempts of State formation have been done under a Unitarian liberal conception, in which the governing elite saw the indigenous peoples and their cultural diversity as an obstacle for the modernisation of the country. The State in the post-Independence regimes explicitly excluded them whereas the post-revolutionary regime included them as subordinates and with a future objective of making them disappear as culturally different peoples. Lastly, in both periods the State failed to build a unique national identity. This is explained by the uneven and incomplete presence of the State and its representatives in different regions of the country, which in turn favoured the existence of indigenous semi-autonomous spaces that discreetly functioned primarily in the communal lands and *ejidos* that they received during the post-revolutionary Land Reform.

Indigenous organisations and their mobilisations were characterised in both periods by their local nature, because they did not transcend their particular interests and because of limited objectives that did not threaten the State structures. Although they forged alliances with other sectors in their struggle to create counter hegemonic State projects, such organisations did not play starring roles in such projects. Additionally, the clientelistic post-revolutionary system hindered the development and self-management of indigenous communities until the 1980s and their leaders and organisations suffered severe threats from conservative PRI sectors, *caciques* and/or irregular armed forces.

Moreover, the governing elites did not manage to carry out the capitalistic model of modernisation in neither of the attempts at State formation because they were not willing to make the necessary structural changes in social relationships and modes of production. This hampered the solid construction of the State, economic development and the consolidation of a real liberal democracy based on the establishment of a genuine rule of law.

As a consequence of the unfinished character of the process of State construction and modernisation, there have been inevitable social contradictions. These have been resolved in different manners by the governing elite: in the first case, through the direct use of violence as the primary instrument. In contrast, post-revolutionary elites used a wide range of formal and informal control mechanisms in order to guarantee the hegemonic continuity of their economic and social project and to "compensate" for its weaknesses.

However, with the severe crisis of the post-revolutionary economic model that was reflected in the debt crisis of 1982, the governing elite was forced to choose a new model of

economic development that was externally orientated, which has implied the reconfiguration of the State towards neo-liberalism. In this way, as the participation of the State in society and the economy decreases, there has also been a decline in its capacities and resources to "institutionally" manage the demands from different social groups as it used to do in the past. Therefore, the use of violence has increased. In other words, together with the weakening of the traditional links to the State and the different sectors, there has been a strengthening and sophistication of the military apparatus and it has participated in matters previously considered the realm of the civilian in order to maintain the political stability of the country and the continuity of a neo-liberal model. All this has increased instability and violence at the rural level, especially in areas of the South East of the country where certain authoritarian practises of the PRI traditional sectors and their intermediaries virtually remain intact since they cannot be controlled as they were in the past.

Lastly, social organisations and different political actors that used to be subordinated to the official clientelism are participating more actively and have decided to organise themselves as a survival mechanism due to the abandonment of the State and the threats of the market. This is the case of indigenous peoples in the South East of Mexico as will be explored in detail in subsequent chapters.

In sum, the main obstacle to the complete construction and modernisation of the Mexican State has been its original weakness that stemmed from the political culture of the governing elites that refuse to carry out the necessary structural changes because they are afraid of losing their traditional power and privileges. This is the historical legacy of the incomplete State formation process in Mexico. In the next chapter, it will be explored how

the adoption of neoliberalism in the mid-1980s has affected the reconfiguration of the Mexican State, particularly the erosion of the post revolutionary mechanisms of control, the new governmental strategies of control and legitimisation to alleviate the negative effects of the neo-liberal model such as neocorporatism and neoindigenism, and the implication for indigenous and peasants in the rural areas.

Chapter Three
Unmasking the Post-Revolutionary Regime and Building a Neo-Liberal State

Globalisation has hit us hard…
the system can no longer conceal what it hides.
It openly tells us: "I will take your land and I will exploit you..."

Ignacio del Valle[98]

The debt crisis in 1982 and the subsequent implementation of the neo-liberal economic model were the main triggers of the most radical transformation of the Mexican post-revolutionary State. These phenomena unveiled the formal and informal control mechanisms of the State that different regimes employed, and forced the governing elite to re-build the State. This implied redefining the concept of nation and the functions of the state apparatus, restructuring the government and its multiple control mechanisms, and altering the relationship between the State and the different sectors of society, especially the rural population and indigenous peoples.

International and National Context

The redirection of the Mexican economy towards a neo-liberal model during the mid-1980s was part of the accelerated global transformation of capitalism, which was characterised by a radical shrinking and reconfiguration of the nation-State (Berger 2001:160; Harvey 2005:13). This favoured the role of 'free market' as leading forces of the economic distribution, the expansion of global capital, and the homogenisation of products and

[98] Ignacio del Valle is a leader of protests of the *ejido* communities of Atenco, state of Mexico, against the building of an international airport in their territory, and he is currently in prison with a sentence of 67 years as a consequence of those mobilisations. Rivera, María (2002) "La lucha no se gana con consignas sino con razones, afirma el dirigente Ignacio del Valle", La Jornada, 17th July, quoted in Jonathan Fox 2003:xii.

systems of production. Likewise, such redirection has given way to a new mode of exploration and exploitation of natural resources and to the *de-territorialisation* and fracture of identities (Canessa 2006:252). In order to face the new demands and changes at the international level, nation-States had to transform their existing organisational structure, territoriality and legality (van Cott 2000a:4).

In Mexico, the PRI government promoted a shift towards a neo-liberal model of development, which was justified as the only possible way to face the weakening of the Import Substitution Model. This resulted in a severe crisis of the foreign debt, the slump of oil prices at the international level, and the decline of governmental income to compensate for the deficit in the balance of payments, causing inflation to rise and unsustainable levels of debt (Harvey 2001:1047). Therefore, a faction of the governing elite discredited the interventionist state policies of the post-revolutionary period regarding the economy and social services, which was also useful to justify the need for a radical change in the model of development.

The economic crisis forced the government of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) to implement strict measures of structural adjustment imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). This entailed deep transformations in the dynamics of the Mexican State in order to recuperate economic stability and renew external funding (Foley 1995; Almeida 2007:126). The main measures were, *inter alia,* the opening of the domestic economy to the global market, the privatisation of state companies, the deregulation of the economy and a campaign of attracting foreign funding in order to develop an export-oriented economy especially driven by private capital (Craske 1996:82; Barkin, Ortiz et al. 1997:20).

One of the first steps in this direction was the formal incorporation in 1985 of Mexico to the *Ronda de Uruguay*, known in English as the GATT (*General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade*), which set off the commercial opening of the country to the world. This was reinforced in 1994, when Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and joined the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Wise, Salazar et al. 2003:1). Through this approach, in a very short period of time, Mexico went from being one of the most protected and closed economies in the world to being one of the most open and liberal ones (Fidler 1996:716).

The implementation of neo-liberal measures in Mexico reduced the participation of the State in the economy and minimised many elements of social protection. In economic terms, this meant that the policies that drove the "stabilising development" were over. Until the early 1980s, these policies involved a high level of State investment in the national economy, the regularisation of prices, fixed interest rates, control of the exchange type, the protection of the national industry with high fees for imports and high taxes on foreign investment together with considerable allowances for the rural areas. Regarding the function of the State in society, the budget was restricted, and there was a serious reduction in the government's expenditure on education, health and other public services (Collier 2000:21; Wise, Salazar et al. 2003:225).[99]

[99] The social expenditure destined to education was considerably reduced. It dropped 20% between 1982 and 1990. The decrease in the health expenditure was so severe that in 1990 the World Bank, main promoter of the measures of structural adjustment, considered that "maybe Mexico had gone too far in reducing the health system" (Renner 1997:20).

In order to implement the new economic model, there were several constitutional reforms which were part of the necessary legislation to free the resources for the market, and these measures deeply influenced the relationship between the State and different sectors of the Mexican society. This was certainly the case with the reform of article 123 -to make collective working contracts more flexible- and article 27, which ended the land distribution process and modified the types of collective ownership of land to allow the privatisation of the *ejidos* and/or to promote private investment on them. As it will be explained later on, the symbolic and legal effects of the reforms were enormous, especially as the State broke the historic pact, created to provide protection and justice for workers and peasants in order to regulate the market. This was translated into the collapse of the ideology that founded the post-revolutionary regime and the PRI (Olvera 2004:415-6).

Key Consequences of the Shift in State Model towards Neo-Liberalism

Towards a New Formation of the Mexican State

In the mid-1980s, with the adoption of the neo-liberal ideology by the governing elite, the third attempt to build the Mexican State started. According to the governing elite, the modernisation of the country could be achieved through the integration of the national economy with the global market, and their interest would be better ensured forging alliances with the transnational elite. This represented a severe rupture with the old order and with the main formal and informal pillars of the post-revolutionary State as will be analysed in the next section.

Rupture with the Post-Revolutionary State

As discussed in the previous chapter, the post-revolutionary State was built using a wide range of formal and informal control mechanisms that ranged from hegemonic domination to the use of violence. This ensured the maintenance of social and political stability for more than five decades and an inward looking economic model. Nevertheless, all those mechanisms wore out with time until they entered a deep crisis in the 1980s, which was intensified with the adoption of neo-liberal measures.

The post-revolutionary State, which was built on a political pact among the main triumphant revolutionary elites, managed to consolidate its legitimacy inside and outside the country thanks to a revolutionary nationalist discourse and an effective system of clientelistic incorporation. This way, the State granted symbolic and material resources to different social sectors in exchange for their submission to its political control, for instance, economic progress in exchange for political passivity (Gordillo 2006:71).

Revolutionary nationalism, as one of the main ideological basis of post-revolutionary regimes, was represented, primarily through: a) the defense of the national; b) the homogenisation and integration of the nation through mestizaje and c) the commitment of the State to the socio-political transformation of the Mexican people. These allowed the governing elite to exert hegemonic domination, and they were severely affected when the economic model was redirected towards neo-liberalism.

In particular, the defense of the national –that for many years justified 'growing inwards' and the international isolation based on the tenacious defense of the 'national sovereignty'-

started to weaken in the 1980s, when the governing elite favoured opening the domestic economy, and focused on production for export and the economic integration to the global market.

Concerning mestizaje, the government recognised the failure of its indigenist policy, something evidenced by the presence of many ethnic groups that maintained their cultures and their own systems of organisation and production. These groups could not be completely integrated into one national identity mainly due to the uneven presence of State institutions in different areas of the country that allowed discrete autonomies to prevail. Finally, the revolutionary commitment to social justice stopped being a responsibility of the state apparatus, so the market forces were in charge of the redistribution of wealth and the provision of different services.

The New Role of the Mexican State

In the early 1980s, the State experienced a genuine ideological transformation (Aitken 1996:24; Powell 1996:40). The state apparatus was no longer conceived as an organised power in the economic and social spheres, and the market was given a greater role (Margheritis and Pereira 2007:32). Therefore, the State ceased to be "representative of all and became orientated principally towards guaranteeing economic growth" (Aitken 1996:25). Consequently, the formulation of governmental policies was subordinated towards the goal of attracting and retaining the highest possible levels of foreign investment (Soederberg 2001:107). This way, the State was (re)constructed with the intention of guaranteeing the optimum conditions for the free market and/or as a broker of global capitalism (Stahler-Sholk 2005:38).

The New Relationship between State and Society

As a consequence of the radical transformation of the post revolutionary State, due to the neo-liberal doctrine, deep changes occurred in the political elite, the State control mechanism and the relationship between the State and society, particularly with the rural population.

As a result of the shift in economic model, there was an internal struggle for State power amongst the political elite, especially within the nationalist-revolutionary and the technocratic-reformist currents of the PRI. This political crisis triggered a slow process of decomposition for the governing party, which ended in the fragmentation of the nationalist current (Craske 1996:79; Gordillo 2006:71). Within the PRI, a democratic current was founded under the direction of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and Ifigenia Martínez, who, in response to the dominance of the technocratic-reformist current in the formation of party policies and "the abandonment of the legacy of the revolution" in the new economic model, resigned from the party in 1987. Once they were out of the PRI, the democratic current launched Cárdenas as a candidate for the presidency in 1988, with the support of other political parties that formed the *Frente Democrático Nacional*, FDN (National Democratic Front). Later, the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática*, PRD (Democratic Revolution Party) emerged from this coalition as one of the principle opposition parties with a centre-left inclination.

At the same time, drastic structural adjustment measures caused severe reductions in public expenditure, which in turn caused a significant crisis of legitimacy and weakened the State's ability to maintain social and political stability across the country. This was

especially due to the reduction, or in some cases elimination, of resources that previously maintained the corporatist-clientelistic system of the PRI. For some authors, these restrictive policies gave way to the dismantlement of the post revolutionary State, the rupture of the social pact, and the loss of traditional instruments of economic and political control over different social sectors. This had a deeply negative effect and generated tensions within the PRI as well as at the national level (Schoijet and Worthington 1993:213; Craske 1996:80; Powell 1996:40; Renner 1997:21; Lawson 2000:273; Harvey 2001:1047).

Some of the opposition to the change in State model and the economic restructuring came precisely from social sectors incorporated within the governing party (Middlebrook 1986:124). These were led by heads of traditional corporations such as the CNC, the CTM and the CROC and emerged because the shift involved an unavoidable reduction of government resources that they required to maintain their power over members of the organisations and control over the political system in general (Soederberg 2001:109).

At the rural level, the crisis of the post-revolutionary State also showed a deep transformation in the kind of alliances that the national governing elite established. In view of the shift in the economic model, the elite began to forge new alliances with transnational elites and gradually abandoned those it had previously created with local elites or *caciques* who ceased to receive the resources of the State. In some cases, the formal political and administrative ties between local elites and the federal government or the PRI were dismantled, freeing them to act independently (Ferreyra and Segura 2000:29). This caused the decomposition of informal control mechanisms that the regime formerly applied in the rural areas i.e. the support and loyalty networks at all levels. This way, the complex

structure of rural intermediation was weakened after being the source of stability for the Mexican countryside for more that seventy years (Bartra 2004:29).

All these events have exacerbated instability and violence at the rural level, where traditional PRI sectors and their intermediaries still have a lot of power but fear loosing their privileges (Hernández Navarro 1998:8). Therefore, the regime has faced a great "subterranean resistance" (Craske 1996; Knight 1996:15). The situation has also been aggravated since the end of the 1990s because of the progressive political and electoral advance of the opposition parties in the municipalities.

In an interesting comparative study, researcher Andrés Villarreal evidenced the close relationship between the electoral advance of the opposition political parties and the levels of violence (measured in homicides) at the local level. The author points out that where the PRI has lost power at the federal and sub-national level, there has been a higher rotation of political power and the *caciques* have not been able to control and deliver goods to their subordinates. In turn, this has decreased their power, and therefore, in some cases, they have used violence to achieve their goals or to maintain their privileges. Similarly, the State weakening or rupture of clientelistic networks has caused a temporary loss of social control and an increase in violence at the rural level (Villarreal 2002).

Therefore, the political result of the transition has been a lack of order and governability in some rural areas, and the regional and local powers –legal and illegal- have taken advantage of this situation by filling the power vacuum left by the State and compensating themselves for the inoperability of formal control mechanism (Pansters 1999:237; Gordillo 2006:74). These local actors used violence more directly and resorted to irregular armed

forces to maintain their domain in 'their respective regions' due to the changes the new economic model required and the better organised socio-political resistance of groups that were marginalised and subordinated under the PRI structure (Amnesty International 1986:13-20; Watch/Americas 1997:1-24; Villarreal 2002). In this sense, "regionalisms" or "federalisms" are being reconstructed, and the regime cannot discipline them as it did in the past (Gledhill 1998:11) hence leading to speculation regarding a dangerous deinstitutionalisation (Riva Palacios 2006) and the feudalisation of power in the Mexican State (Hernández Navarro 1998:8).

Luis Hernández, a renowned political analyst, argues that the period of implementation of neo-liberal measures has witnessed a reactionary coalition of governors and political chiefs of the PRI that have been against the change –mainly in the Southeast of the country- which in some regions have turned into violent enclaves (Hernández Navarro 1998:8). It is interesting to note that during the presidency of Salinas the governors acted as strategic elements of the authoritarian regime. However, many of them refused to back the neo-liberal reforms in the name of federalism. Significantly, in the first three years of the Salinas's administration (1988-1991), nine out of the 31 PRI governors were forced to resign by the president, who still had sufficient authoritarian power to remove them from their posts (Fox 1994:175). The government of Ernesto Zedillo (1995-2000), however, could not repeat such a course of action, which aggravated the regionalisation of violence and deepened the successive loss of control of the PRI governors in their states.

In addition, with the accelerated transformation of the economic models, the different agents of the State have more openly resorted to repression when social and political resistances have been left outside of the government's control (Gledhill 1998:9). The

regime of Miguel de la Madrid, the first to promote neo-liberal economic measures, is particularly notable and marked a period in which State violence was significant, especially against those who criticised the policies of the government and/or its economic model. This has been evidenced by the fact that more than thirty journalists were assassinated during his administration. Likewise, in the academic and intellectual sphere, self-censorship and structural subordination of some institutions of academic research predominate (Schoijet and Worthington 1993:220).[100]

For its part, the regime of Carlos Salinas attempted to co-opt those movements that were adverse to the neo-liberal project, but, above all, marginalised critical political opposition and confronted it with violence (Esteva 2001:141). Salinas even publicly declared, "I don't see them and I don't hear them" in reference to members of the PRD. In contrast, with the conservative *Partido Acción Nacional*, PAN (National Action Party), Salinas established a link in which the party acted as 'loyal opposition' and shared the same economic perspective. In exchange for recognising the victories of the party at the local level, Salinas would get support from the PAN legislators through "*concertacesiones*",[101] and he managed to maintain relative political stability in the country, simultaneously maintaining the neo-liberal policies intact (Otero 2004:9-11; Ramírez 2005).

Throughout the Salinas administration, State violence increased and a robust and systematic repression of the left-wing opposition was exerted. Many PRD supporters in the states were

[100] Mauricio Schoijet and Ricard Worthington have documented co-option and repression against researchers who criticised or questioned the PRI, against those dedicated to the study of the environment and energy, or committed to confront left-wing personalities (Schoijet, M and R. Worthington 1993:209).
[101] *Concertacesiones* are informal pacts and arrangements between the political elites, generally PRI and PAN Congressmen.

assassinated during electoral periods (PRD 1994; Craske 1996:78; Knight 1996:11).[102] For some authors, this demonstrates the governing elite was still not ready for the political or economic opening in some regions of the country (Craske 1996:86-7).

In sum, the change in the State model towards a more neo-liberal variant has been accompanied by an increase in violence exerted both by the state apparatus and by the local elites and their irregular forces. Likewise, the severe crisis of political and social legitimacy caused by the dismantlement of the corporatist-clientelistic system and the disappearance of its nationalist ideology has not allowed the regime to replace or renovate its already corroded control mechanisms and interrelations with society. Attempts to resolve this crisis were undertaken through governmental policies such as the neo-corporatism and neo-indigenism. Nevertheless, both attempts have failed and generated ungovernability and violence largely at the local level as subsequently discussed.

From Exploitation to Exclusion: The Impact of Economic Liberalisation at the Rural Level

The Free Trade Agreement is the death sentence
of indigenous peoples in Mexico.

Subcomandante Marcos
San Cristóbal de las Casas, 1994.

The implementation of the neo-liberal model and the subsequent constitutional amendments has had impacts on every sector of the Mexican economy. However, it has been the rural areas where the abandonment of the governmental institutions has been felt the most, with a dramatic reduction of public resources mostly destined to support small land producers in

[102] The Secretariat of Human Rights of the PRD has reported that during Salinas' administration, more than 300 members of the PRD have been assassinated (PRD 1994).

the Southeast of the country (Moguel 1994; Barkin, Ortiz et al. 1997:18; Wise, Salazar et al. 2003:4; Middlebrook 2004:32; Otero 2004:12).[103]

As the Mexican countryside is characterised by wide regional variety and heterogeneity regarding land ownership, farming systems, the weather and quality of life, amongst others; the withdrawal of the State as the central agent of rural development has had different levels of impact. In marginalised regions, mostly inhabited by indigenous peoples where subsistence agriculture predominates, the consequences have been particularly negative (Bartra 2004:27; Fernández C 2004).

Before the commercial opening of markets, the agricultural sector was one of the most protected ones in the Mexican economy because it was seen as one of the main pillars of the socio-political stability of the country. The regime had the support of rural groups due to two key aspects of the corporatist-clientelistic system in the countryside: economic subsidies for production and Land Reform (Otero 2004:12). Hence, for many years there was a strong co-relationship of dependency between the indigenous-peasant peoples and the State. In exchange for their electoral passivity, the governmental institutions would give them conditioned access to the land, loans and support to commercialise their agricultural products (Otero 1999:132). As rural analyst William Yaworsky argues: "while there were lands available to re-distribute and the price of oil was high, the legitimacy and order were maintained in the countryside" (Yaworsky 2005:409).

[103] Neo-liberal policies caused more than two million of new poor people and reduced the salary in the countryside in more than 51 % between 1984 and 1992 (Moguel 1994:39).

Although it provided tangible benefits for Mexican peasants and indigenous peoples, the strong intervention of the State also fostered paternalism, which limited autonomous actions from those social groups (Acuña Rodarte 2003:139). Therefore, the State forced them into a relationship characterised by dependency upon both governmental programmes and other forms of control with representation imposed through the PRI and the CNC.

Until the early 1980s, the Mexican government played a central role in the production and commercialisation of products from the countryside. The main objective of state companies was fostering production and guaranteeing a minimum income for local producers and, at the same time, indirectly supporting the process of industrialisation of the country (Acuña Rodarte 2003:132-8). This was the case of the *Compañia Nacional de Subsistencias Populares*, Conasupo (National Company of Popular Subsistence), which built warehouses to stock pulses, regulate prices and distribute different products around the country.[104]

However, under the neo-liberal scheme, the government ceased to have such a role and swiftly abandoned producers, leaving them at the mercy of the international market. The commercial opening cleared the way for imported agricultural products -with high subsidies from their country of origin- while subsidies for the national agricultural production were severely reduced (Foley 1995:60; Renner 1997; Aranda Bezaury 2003:153; Wise, Salazar et al. 2003:4).[105]

[104] The Conasupo played a very important role in regulating the pulses market, setting warranty prices and distributing products, amongst other kinds of support for agricultural producers. Other State companies that were key in the rural process of production were: *Instituto Mexicano del Café (Inmecafe), Tabacos de México (Tabamex), Productos Químicos y Vegetales de México (Proquivemex), Fertilizantes Mexicanos (Fertimex), Banco Nacional Agropecurio* and the *Banco Nacional de Crédito Rural*. All of these disappeared towards the end of the 1980s (Acuña Rodarte 2003:132).

[105] According to Olivia Acuña, whilst in Mexico governmental subsidies in the countryside were significantly reduced, in the United States –Mexico's main commercial partner- such subsidies increased substantially. Likewise, between 1994 and 2000 in Mexico resources destined to agriculture decreased from 6.2% to 4.3%

All this aggravated the crisis in the rural areas and the abrupt dismantling of programmes that supported production left producers with neither significant alternatives nor compensation. Such dismantling covered all governmental support, from technical support to loans and commercialisation of crops (Foley 1995:63; Renner 1997; Acuña Rodarte 2003:130-3; Bartra 2004).

The Accelerated Penetration of Capitalism in the Rural Areas

The reorientation towards the neo-liberal economic model and the consequent opening of the market have accelerated the expansion and the penetration of capitalisms in many rural and indigenous communities that during the post revolutionary period remained 'protected' or whose resources were kept relatively outside of the market.

Neo-liberalism, as part of the new form of global capitalist accumulation, searches for resources (Harvey 2001) and routes (Call 2002) still unexploited or unexplored. In this sense, the advance of transnational companies has been seen as a result of the liberalisation of resources such as land and an increased mobility of the populations looking for paid jobs in regions that were relatively marginalised in the past. Moreover, there has been a heightened degree of competition amongst such transnational companies to access biological and genetic resources in 'protected areas' in order to exploit and patent them. Over time, this has adverse effects for local populations, mainly indigenous peoples from

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of the national budget whilst in the US they were increased by 350% (Acuña Rodarte 2003: 137). Other authors argue that the average increase of subsidies for the main competitors of agricultural producers (so to say the North Americans) has been between 70% and 80% since NAFTA entered into force (Bartra 2004:24).

the Southeast of the country where most of these resources can be found (Ross 1997:35; Harvey 2001:1050; Bartra 2004:23).[106]

In the post revolutionary era, with the implementation of constitutional article 27 and especially thanks to the Land Reform -that conferred *ejidos* and communal lands to rural producers-, the advance of capitalism in the countryside was decelerated (Bartra 1993:20). Roger Bartra suggests that the *ejido* was an obstacle to the complete development of capitalism in rural areas because, according to the *ejido* laws, they were out of the market and "belonged to the Mexican State and could not be sold nor rented". Moreover, the *ejido* system on the one hand, impeded the process of '*depeasantisation'* of the rural population, yet on the other hand contributed to the super-exploitation of peasants in the long term as they produced for the market under non-capitalist conditions (Bartra 1993:20).

Similarly, there are some analysts that consider the *ejido* as more of a political electoral strategy of the governing elite than a sustainable economic policy (Fernández C 2004:513; Mackinlay 2004:288; Otero 2004:80). Thus, at the beginning of the post revolutionary period the social and economic objectives of the Land Reform were less important than its political function, which largely consisted of the pacification and stabilisation of the country (Werner T. 1988:497). Therefore, the main function of the *ejido* was as an "instrument to buy peace"[107] and, as a political aphorism later suggested, "the *ejido* wasn't

[106] Mexico is one of the seven countries with the highest biodiversity in the world (Harvey 2001:1045-51; World Bank 2003:22). It has 14% of the plant species in the world and a variety of birds and other animal species mostly located in the Southeast of the country (Harvey 2001:1051). Moreover, three of the federal states that make up this region Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas have 25% of the forests and jungles where half of the country's water passes through (World Bank 2003:22).

[107] The former president and founder of the PNR, Plutarco E. Calles, said it clearly, "the ejido is the best way to control those people by simply telling them: 'If you want these lands, you have to be with the government. Those who are not with the government will not get any land'. In conversation with Ignacio Enríquez, former governor of Chihuahua, published in Excélsior 10, No. 5, 1970, quoted by Werner 1988:497.

created to produce but to vote" (López Gallo 1976:513). It was not until the Presidency of Cárdenas (1934-1940) that the *ejido* system was given an important push as an entity of economic development (Brandenburg 1964:141; Knight 1991:216). However, State support diminished with subsequent governments and a land counter-reform project was announced (Werner T. 1988:506; Greenberg 1989:97). In sum, for these authors, the Land Reform and specifically the *ejido* were the main links of subordination and political control between the PRI regime on the one hand, and peasants and indigenous peoples on the other, and they had very little economic relevance.

Other analysts highlight the importance of the ejido system claiming it had, and indeed still has, a productive socio-cultural function because it has meaning beyond commercial value. For them, the ejido complies with an essential function for social reproduction (Gledhill 1996:184). From this point of view, the distribution of ejidos or communal lands by the State contributed to the revitalisation of indigenous communities and their practises during the post-revolutionary period (Zárate 2003:7). Furthermore, they were allowed a relative degree of autonomy which, in many cases, was outside the State control (Yashar 2005:63). In this sense, these forms of collective property have been essential for indigenous peoples and peasants because they have been a fundamental base for communal organisation and have built on spaces where the exercise of collective rights is possible. This is particularly evident in the South Eastern states of Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas, where indigenous groups and the collective use of the land predominate with a respective 48%, 67% and 49% of the territory. [108]

[108] Data taken from INEGI 2000, cited in Carraco et al. 2003: 10.

By 1992, the year in which constitutional article 27 was modified, more than 50% of the national territory was made up of *ejidos* and communal lands, whilst 30% of the Mexican population still lived and worked in rural areas (Otero 2004:12).[109]

Amendments to Constitutional Article 27

The amendments of article 27 in 1992 robbed many peasants not just of the possibility of gaining a piece of land, but, quite, simply, of hope.

George Collier, 2000[110]

In order to integrate the national economy with the global economy, the government initiated a series of constitutional amendments. As previously mentioned, one of the most important of these reforms was the amendment of constitutional article 27, modified to allow the selling and renting of *ejidos* and communal lands which had been outside of the market by law since the Mexican Revolution (Acuña Rodarte 2003:131).

One of the most important implications of this amendment was the explicit declaration that there were no more lands to distribute, which dashed the hope of peasants and indigenous peoples getting a piece of land in the future. This measure was translated into a symbolic rupture of commitments made by the State with the rural population and the elimination of a pre-established social contract and the revolutionary legacy that was the *ejido* as a sign of justice and social peace in the rural areas (Berger 2001:161; Harvey 2001).

However, for some authors, the amendment of article 27 was representative of "giving legitimacy *de jure* to practises that had already been taking place" (Foley 1995:62; Jones

[109] Gareth Jones states that 55% of the national territory is composed of *ejidos* (Jones 1996:188). Sandra Fernández points out that by April 2004, the government recognised that 53% of the Mexican territory was distributed in *ejidos*, which means that they covered more than 75% of tillable land (Fernández 2004:70).
[110] George Collier (2000). "Zapatismo resurgent: Land and autonomy in Chiapas." NACLA Report on the Americas **33** (5): 20-25.

1996; Cornelius and Myhre 1998). In this sense, the government of José López Portillo (1976-1982) had already declared, "there was not anymore land to distribute in Mexico", which was reaffirmed by president Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988). Likewise, the *Ley de Fomento Agropecuario* (Law of Agricultural Promotion) ambiguously allowed the practice of renting *ejido* lands to individuals and private companies (Jones 1996:191). What the constitutional amendment modified was the prohibition on the transfer of collective property so that they could then be sold to individuals outside the community and create joint ventures between *ejido* owners and private capital (Wise, Salazar et al. 2003:218).

The amendment of constitutional article 27 was in reality a formidable imposition that reflected the authoritarianism that predominated in Mexico in the 1990s. It was not just conceived from above but also approved behind closed doors in 1992 under the direction of the president. It was only publicly approved after the legislative powers put together the corresponding consultations and debates only to follow formal procedures (Foley 1995:67; Hindley 1996; Stahler-Sholk 2005:37).

Therefore, the amendment of article 27, which was considered one of the pillars and most important achievements of the Revolution and had given the post-revolutionary regime a huge popular support base and social peace, was surprisingly approved without much opposition and within a couple of months of 'negotiations' (Jones 1996:188; Renner 1997:14).[111] This could be explained by the weak opposition and the passiveness of the peasant and indigenous groups, as well as the control that the corporate system still maintained upon them. Furthermore, there was a broad consensus, even amongst the most

[111] There were protests in opposition to this attempt by the *Coordinadora de Organizaciones Agrarias*, COA (Coordinating Committee of Agrarian Organisations), which was comprised of the CNPA and the CIOAC. However, they did not manage to open the debate or interrupt the implementation of the reform (Foley 1995).

ardent proponents of the *ejido* system, around the idea that something should be done to modernise the countryside and stimulate agricultural production (Jones 1996:190; Cornelius and Myhre 1998:3).[112] There was also an implicit agreement between the PRI and the PAN concerning these kinds of liberal policies for the countryside, many of which had been originally proposed by the latter. Therefore, the reform was approved by a majority in Congress (Olvera 2004:417).

The Principle Effects of the Reform of Constitutional Article 27 on the Countryside

One of the main consequences of the neo-liberal transformation in the Mexican countryside was that the land became merchandise for the private sector. At the same time, indigenous peoples and peasants became a migratory labour force, which was incrementally transnationalised. Based on the amendments of constitutional article 27, the legal protection of *ejidos* and communal lands was eliminated by allowing them to be sold to individuals. This, along with the modernisation process, has generated more new peasants without land all around the country (Hernández Navarro 1994:9; Foley 1995:73). Different authors concur with this, stating that governmental reforms and policies that were implemented had the aim of 'uprooting' populations from their communities and liberating their lands and resources in order to be able to integrate them into the global market (Edelman 2000:18; Stahler-Sholk 2005:34). While agricultural production on the small scale became more difficult, mainly due to the withdrawal of government subsidies in the countryside and an

[112] It was argued that there were undeniable demographic pressures and strong environmental degradations, especially of the soil, caused by the harvesting method of "cut and burn" used by the communities for many years (Carrasco, T. S. Davis, et al. 2003:9); moreover, the *ejidos* did not have sufficient credit or support to improve production (Renner 1997:16).

uneven production competition, the sale of lands and the migration of rural producers to the cities became more frequent (Call 2002:25).

However, for rural development researcher Gareth Jones, such reform is not strictly speaking an attempt to destroy *ejidos,* but rather a mean to finish with old social and economic relationships. According to the author, President Salinas attempted to substitute them with new governmental mechanisms to avoid the intermediation of *caciques* and to intervene in *ejido* matters with a type of State control different from the one utilised by the CNC. An example of this is the new *Procuraduría Agraria* (Jones 1996:193).

In order to carry out the amendment to article 27, the federal government created the *Programa de Certificación de Derechos Ejidales y Titulación de Solares*, Procede (Programme of Certification of Rights over *Ejidos* and Titling of Lands) that standardised the possession of lands and especially the social possession of lands. This programme consisted of providing land certificates to those who voluntarily decided to turn communal lands into individual private property (Call 2002:25). Fostering such programme altered the collective management of lands in indigenous towns offering individual plot titles, which in turn has generated conflicts and division within the communities between those who support the division of lands and those who are against it (Stahler-Sholk 2005).

One of the most negative effects of the amendments and the commercial opening has been the intense indigenous immigration to urban cities in Mexico and the US. Due to this phenomenon, some indigenous peasants have broken their traditional ties with their communities, their families and lands. The robust security measures imposed by the government of the United States to prevent illegal immigration across the border with

Mexico have affected those ties even more. Because of these measures, immigrants that manage to cross over to the US are afraid to return to Mexico, so they do not go back as frequently as before and tend to stay in the US (Wise, Salazar et al. 2003:221). However, there have also been cases when, thanks to the remittances sent by immigrants in the US, whole communities have been able to survive and keep their traditions alive (Fernández C 2004:187).

Another factor that has altered the dynamics of the communities and has further impoverished the countryside and its population has been the change of priorities in national agricultural production. These are increasingly focusing on export products such as fruit and vegetables, so the production of basic goods such as corn and beans is decreasing. All this forces rural producers to depend on international prices not only for production but also for consumption (Mumme 2007:97).

Impact of the Commercial Opening on Indigenous Peoples

It is important to recognise that this new impulse of capitalism in indigenous populations has had notable variations across different regions of the country. This can be explained by the diversity on the types of relationships that such populations have historically established with the outside, the inter-relationships with other ethnical groups or social classes, and the degree of resistance or willingness of the local elites to embed themselves in the process of economic neoliberal modernisation.

However, the accelerated expansion of capitalism in rural areas has been one of the phenomena that have most deeply altered the way in which indigenous communities live

and produce. For some authors, this causes high levels of violence, especially the "*de-harmonisation*" of rural dynamics, the unpunished violence exerted by *caciques* or local leaders in order to maintain their privileges and forms of production, as well as the partial and inefficient action of local governmental authorities (Hu-DeHart 1988; Greenberg 1989).

In a case study on an indigenous community in the state of Oaxaca, James Greenberg has demonstrated that the introduction of crops for commercial purposes -such as coffee- caused a high level of violence in communal lands in Oaxaca and broke up internal dynamics and operations.[113] Greenberg highlights the main transformations that have taken place in rural indigenous communities because of the penetration of capitalism as including, amongst others, the "commoditisation" of both lands and works, so communal work is not carried out for reciprocity but for a salary. For this reason, the patterns of production have changed from being for maintenance or survival to being for commercial purposes and, in turn, to generate surplus. Similarly, Greenberg argues that there is a higher level of coexistence and interaction between different ethnical groups and social classes that compete for resources and spaces in the market and local power. All this has modified community dynamics that existed for many centuries in indigenous populations, and, in some cases, it has even generated violent conflict (Greenberg 1989:202-5).[114]

[113] James Greenberg research shows that the average of assassinations in the district of Juquila is amongst the highest in Mexico because it is above the national average of 17, with more than 29 homicides for every 100,000 inhabitants every year (Greenberg 1989:147).

[114] This way, in marginalised and remote indigenous communities, traditional norms such as sharing and cooperating (which means much more than the simple distribution of goods and services, but the establishment of a shared trust and safety) started to be violated. However, due to this phenomenon, members of rural communities are less keen to distribute resources or surplus amongst their own communities through sponsoring parties or community posts. All this has gradually destroyed the social fabric of some communities where the advance of capitalist modernisation has been more comprehensive. Likewise, indigenous peoples without lands have been forced to migrate to the cities in search for paid jobs, which has also weakened the social fabric and accelerated the process of acculturation of immigrants (Greenberg 1989:202-5).

In this context, the commercial logic has meant that high quality lands used to grow commercial agricultural products have become very desirable lands, not only amongst the members of the community but also amongst "*fuereños*" (outsiders). This has generated competition for lands that in many instances has led to violence. *Mestizos* showed a special interest in buying or renting communal lands. This group has mostly benefited from the commercial system because they know how the political system works better than indigenous peoples do, and, furthermore, they have more economic resources and more possibilities to access clientelistic networks. This has also contributed to inter-ethnical conflicts and internal tensions in rural communities (Greenberg 1989:220-1).

Additionally, recent legislative modifications regarding the economic opening and the possibility of privatising *ejidos* or communal lands, endanger the autonomy that some indigenous populations achieved as a consequence of the post-revolutionary Land Reform. By virtue of the Reform, they managed to rebuild their communal property, establish their own systems to elect their authorities and make their own decisions in an independent manner, thus exercising their community rights and their local self-management (Zárate 2003; Yashar 2005). Currently, indigenous territories (both land and resources) are at risk due to the advance of the market and its agents, who threaten the survival of these communities, their ability to act collectively and the possibility of preserving their cultural and social identity and its manifestation through political representation.

Different Rural Strategies for Survival

The rapid withdrawal of the State, the liberation policies and the uneven transfer of assets to the countryside left producers unaided and alone. Nonetheless, they have found ways to face the challenge of neo-liberal globalisation by creating their own alternative systems (Aranda Bezaury 2003:153).

Hence, peasants and indigenous peoples have had to combine different strategies, both individual and collective, in order to survive. Amongst the individual strategies, there is the diversification of crops production, migration, selling crafts, proletarian or informal work in the cities, the incorporation of other members of the family to working the land or to get paid jobs, and the reduction of the level of consumption (Edelman 2000:14-8; Fernández C 2004:97). It has also been mentioned that there is a utilization of some small and targeted governmental allowances that support, for example, the creation of "small and medium-sized businesses targeting export production" (Yaworsky 2005:423). However, the alternative of growing and selling drugs has also increased (Acuña Rodarte 2003:152).

In parallel, due to the seriousness of the situation in the countryside, rural producers have also seen the need to act in a collective way, so they have created community companies of social solidarity, cooperatives of producers and unions of *ejido* owners amongst other organisational structures. Some of these organisations have been successful and have generated self-management processes. Some others have failed due to their lack of opportunities to compete with other producers, resist the obstacles and the violence imposed by intermediaries and the lack of national representation and articulation, and, in

some cases, due to the weakness of their own internal structures, the lack of training and the overrepresentation of their leaders (Wise, Salazar et al. 2003:216).

The Flourishing of Autonomous Social Organisations

Paradoxically, the negative effects of neo-liberalism in the 1980s have stimulated an increase in the mobilisation and creation of a great number of independent social organisations in rural areas. Amongst the most important factors in explaining this phenomenon are:

a) The abandonment of the countryside and the negligence of the Mexican State towards it.
b) The difficult economic situation and the lack of governmental alternatives (Postero and Zamosc 2004:23-4).
c) The end of the monopoly of the political and social intermediation and representation (Pansters 1999:240).
d) The weakening of the corporate system and, therefore, the decrease in its political control and the formal links with the state apparatus, particularly with the CNC and the PRI (Mackinlay 2004:291).
e) The political liberalisation that was inherent to the process of globalisation, which is characterised by the reduction of sanctions and obstacles by the state apparatus in order to establish horizontal and multisectorial relationships, which cut the price of organised social mobilisations (Almeida 2007:129-35).
f) Environmental damage (Mumme 2007:98).[115]
g) The defense of the way of life of rural communities and their collective rights.

[115] Mexico is considered the second country with the highest levels of deforestation in the world because between 1993 and 2000 it lost an area of forests and jungles equivalent to the size of Ireland, especially due to the illegal tree felling and cattle farming (EcoAmericas 2002 quoted in Mumme 2007:98).

h) The defense of human rights and the improvement of living conditions because social and economic benefits have been threatened in periods when governmental commitment towards guaranteeing social wellbeing has been reduced (Dietz 2004).
i) The defense of natural resources in view of the threat that the development of national and transnational companies represent to indigenous territories (Harvey 2001; Bartra 2004:35).
j) Constitutional reforms, especially amendments to article 27, which jeopardized the relative autonomy that peasant and indigenous communities used to have during the post-revolutionary era (Zárate 2003; Yashar 2005).
k) The re-appropriation of community development faced with the withdrawal of developmental and indigenous governmental programmes (Dietz 2004:52).
l) The recognition and fostering of the socio-ecological functions of peasant agriculture (Bartra 2004:20).

As it can be observed, there are multiple motives that led rural producers to organise themselves in order to ensure their self-preservation. Some of these organisations have consolidated and adapted themselves to new market conditions. Others have developed independent initiatives to influence or change public policies of the State that threaten their ways of life (Wise, Salazar et al. 2003:8).[116] Nevertheless, in view of the frustration caused by the weak governmental response or by the violence exerted by *caciques* or illegal armed groups, some social organisations have radicalised their discourse and actions (García de León 1995:11). Some organisations have even opted for an armed response and have joined the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*, EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), the *Ejército Popular Revolucionario*, EPR (Popular Revolutionary Army) or other armed groups (Zárate 2003:25).[117]

[116] Some of the rural producers' organisations have worked with government officials to promote internal campaigns for the consumption of coffee, they have made alliances with international organisations to foster campaigns and fora to pressure to getting fair prices for their coffee and other products (Aranda 2003:167).
[117] Repression and other forms of violence against social organisations and movements increased due to the implementation of the new model. In a recent study, researcher Paul Almeida shows that in comparison with

In sum, since the government implemented the neo-liberal model in the 1980s, rural producers are not seen as key agents in the State's national development project rather they are considered "neither producers nor consumers"; furthermore, even if they were asked to shed their peasants identity and adopt a new way of life, there is no sector of the economy that could absorb them (Barkin, Ortiz et al. 1997:18). In Mexico, as evidenced in a recent study, there is even a process of "*de-industrialisation"* in view of the national and international economic slow down (Soederberg 2001:113). Therefore, for the State, indigenous peoples and peasants are simply left out of the new model (Hale 2006:56).

New Governmental Strategies to Face the Legitimacy Crisis

Neo-liberal structural adjustment measures have been so severe for the population in general that they have been accompanied by a noticeable popular dissatisfaction that has been expressed in the different electoral processes.[118] In this sense, the 1988 presidential elections stand out because the PRI had the lowest amount of votes ever, amidst strong accusations of electoral fraud to maintain the power of the State. For this reason, the official PRI candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), assumed the presidency of the Republic with a remarkable deficit of socio-political credibility and legitimacy (Renner 1997:21).[119]

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other countries in Latin America, Mexico has a relatively low level of social movements that are organised and carry out protests against neo-liberal policies. However, together with Chile and Dominican Republic, it has one of the highest quantity of people injured or detained as a result of such demonstrations (Almeida 2007:135-6).

[118] The economic crisis seriously affected the quality of life of the Mexican population, which was reflected more clearly in the abrupt plunge of purchasing power of the minimum salary, that decreased more that 40% between 1980 and 1987 (Soederberg 2001:111).

[119] It is important to mention that since the 1982 elections, the PRI started to get the lowest percentages of votes in its whole history. This is a consequence of the profound popular lack of satisfaction regarding the

From the beginning of his administration, Salinas tried to recuperate the legitimacy and power of the state apparatus through a discourse espousing a new role of the State and national identity (Aitken 1996:XI). For this purpose, he promised to transform the PRI and its electoral base.[120] However, many authors concur that Salinas privileged economic reform and maintained practices typical of the old authoritarian State through the creation of neo-clientelistic and neo-corporatist mechanisms that sought new alliances with actors excluded from the traditional machinery of the PRI (Dresser 1991; Craske 1996:79; Jones 1996:197; Knight 1996; Soederberg 2001; Gordillo 2006).

Salinas' struggle for legitimacy at the national and international level was based on two main strategies:

a) Social liberalism, which was applied through the *Programa Nacional de Solidaridad*, Pronasol (National Programme of Solidarity) and the *Programa de Apoyos Directos al Campo*, Procampo (Programme of Direct Support for the Countryside), which has been interpreted by some critics as "social paternalism" (Knight 1996:3), and neo-corporatism or neo-populism (Dresser 1991; Aitken 1996:26); and

b) Promoting multiculturalism based on a "new relationship of the State with indigenous peoples", which implied abandoning the indigenist assimilationist policy of the State (Hindley 1996:225). The latter induced the regime to drive the amendments to

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government's austerity measures more so than the population shifting their support to an opposition political party (Middlebrook 1986:139).

[120] Salinas argued that the PRI was going to stop being a party of corporations to become a party of organisations and citizens (Aitken 1996).

constitutional article four so that the existence of indigenous peoples was recognised, and included the ratification of Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and restructuring the INI.

Salinas' Neo-Corporatism

Pronasol emerged from, and was managed by, the Presidency of the Republic, and it bestowed the executive with strong discretional powers. Hence, it worked as an effective instrument of political legitimacy in view of the crisis of post-revolutionary control mechanisms (Foley 1995:63; Craske 1996:89; Knight 1996:11; Soederberg 2001:109). This programme had a decentralised character and was conceived to alleviate poverty "while the Mexican economy adjusted to the market". Then the government would respond to the 'victims' of the market offering "neo-populist solutions to neo-liberal problems" (Dresser 1991; Knight 1996:5-6).

President Salinas wanted to keep people tied to the political system in order to guarantee the necessary political stability while he carried out the economic restructuring. Instead of using the clientelistic system of the PRI –that was facing a severe internal crisis-, it decided to create Pronasol in order to support its policies, organising people in a vertical hierarchical manner (Craske 1996:83). Officially, Pronasol was supposed to alleviate poverty by combining State resources with community organisation and work. However, the programme did not create stronger and more legitimate collaborative ties between the State and civil society, but reinforced a form of relationship dictated from above and of a conditioned character (Knight 1996:6).

Procampo, created in 1993, gave cash to producers to help them face the negative effects of the commercial opening on an individual basis. From the point of view of the regime, this governmental support would 'encourage' producers to choose growing crops for competitive commercialisation and at the same time it would prepare them for the total withdrawal of the State from the agricultural sector (Gledhill 1996:175; Stahler-Sholk 2005:36). However, this programme contributed instead to the atomisation of economic organisations of producers in the regions by discouraging its operation (Zárate 2003:14).

Salinas' general strategy was to eliminate intermediary structures such as the CNC and networks created by local *caciques* to generate other forms of dependency through the establishment of new bureaucratic organisms. This increased the vulnerability of the population in view of the manipulation that the regime exerted (Gledhill 1996:180).[121] Finally, governmental programmes became an instrument for political manipulation; most critics coincided that they were a means to buy votes during electoral periods or to disarticulate, divide and/or co-opt the opposition, mainly comprised of left-wing dissidents (Aitken 1996:38; Gledhill 1996:180; Knight 1996; Renner 1997:22; Stahler-Sholk 2005:36).

In sum, with neo-corporatist programs such as Procampo and Pronasol, which were based on direct support of the State to communities, intermediaries and *caciques* were relatively marginalised. Nonetheless, the power of peasant organisations to decide was affected, as was the authority of community leaders in indigenous populations because the new

[121] In 1989, Salinas created the *Consejo Agrario Permanente*, CAP (Permanent Agrarian Council) in order to replace the CNC and include social organisations considered moderate such as the *Unión Nacional de Organizaciones Regionales Campesinas Autónomas*, UNORCA (National Union of Autonomous Regional Peasant Organisations) (Foley 1995:63).

distribution channels of governmental resources were exclusive to the State committees of Solidarity (Dietz 2004:50).

The Beginnings of Neo-Indigenism

The second governmental strategy implemented by the Salinas administration with the intention of legitimising the regime, was to promote a national ideology orientated towards the recognition of Mexico as a multicultural nation. For this purpose, in 1992 president Salinas officially accepted the failure of the indigenist policies that promoted cultural homogeneity in Mexico applied until well into the 1980s (Esteva 2001:120; Harvey 2001:1047). Subsequently, Salinas decided to modify the Constitution to foster multiculturalism as a new policy of the State (Hindley 1996:230).

Salinas' indigenist reform was conceived as a strategy to enhance national and international legitimacy. Some authors argue that it was carried out "more to benefit his own image and with little if any intention of being implemented" (Hindlley 1996:225; Díaz Polanco 2003).

At the national level, Salinas carried out institutional changes to 'recognise' indigenous populations. One of the most significant ones involved the INI. Arturo Warman, a distinguished anthropologist, was chosen to lead a new phase that would leave behind the assimilationist policies and instead promote cultural diversity, as well as the 'participation' of indigenous peoples in the development of the country. However, no indigenous peoples were appointed to manage the projects. Instead, they were given operative functions. Furthermore, the government also created the *Comisión Nacional de Justicia para los Pueblos Indígenas*, CNJPI (National Committee of Justice for Indigenous Peoples), as the

body in charge of putting together legislative proposals regarding the necessary institutional changes and recognising indigenous peoples and their rights. Nevertheless, this committee also failed to consult indigenous peoples who did not have a significant representation (Hindley 1996:230-33).

At the international level, Mexico became the second country –after Norway- to sign the ILO's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention in 1990. This Convention was ratified by the Senate in August of the same year in order to start a process of corresponding internal reforms. As this thesis will explore in subsequent chapters, the signing of the Convention has been very relevant for indigenous organisations because it is an international tool that protects indigenous peoples from States, and fosters the compliance of collective rights such as self-determination vis-à-vis their lands, resources and forms of government.

One of the most important internal reforms was the 1992 amendment to constitutional article four, now article two, by which the government formally recognised the existence of indigenous peoples, an unprecedented fact in the history of Mexico (Stavenhagen 1992:14; Hindley 1996a; Franco 1999:122-3). The text mentioned that:

> *The Mexican nation has a multicultural composition originally based on its indigenous peoples. The law will promote and protect the development of their languages, cultures, customs and traditions, resources and specific forms of social organisation and will guarantee that their members have an effective access to the State's jurisdiction. In trials and procedures related to their lands they might be involved with, their practices and legal customs will be taken into account according to the terms established by law.*

However, the paragraph that was added to constitutional article four did not specify how indigenous communities could exercise those rights in practice (Hernández Navarro and Carlsen 2004:444). In this sense, as some political analysts have criticised, there were no secondary laws nor were there the necessary mechanisms to implement the new

governmental resolution (Barabas 1996; van Cott 2000a; Sieder 2006:1). For instance, there was no training for lawyer´s customary law or lawyers specialising in indigenous matters and there were insufficient bilingual lawyers.

Jane Hindley, a social anthropologist who has studied in depth the implications of the amendments to article four, points out that the national legislation regarding indigenous peoples was left in limbo and had very ambiguous legal terms. For this reason, in the end, the Mexican State maintained its prerogative to define what it meant to protect such peoples, and both develop and incorporate the content of the paragraph that was added to the Constitution in order to design corresponding policies. Moreover, Hindley states that the pre-existing structures of representation were still in force and that indigenous peoples were not granted economic, social and political rights, in contravention of what ILO Convention 169 established (Hindley 1996:236).

Across the federal states, implementation of this reform varied considerably. Indeed, with the exception of Oaxaca, Campeche, Quintana Roo and Chihuahua, there were no substantial changes and they were trapped in political rhetoric (Hernández Navarro and Carlsen 2004:445). Therefore, the constitutional reform was considered insufficient and incomplete, especially because it did not include one of the main demands of indigenous peoples i.e. their autonomy -understood as self-government or self-determination regarding their resources and internal affairs (Gómez 1997, Hernández and Carlsen 2004:444).

The amendments to article four reflect the predominance of the authoritarian regime and the weaknesses of national indigenous organisations and the opposition. As in the case of article 27, such reform was accepted without any changes, based on consultations that

lacked any significance (García de León 1995; Hindley 1996:234).[122] Thus, one of the biggest criticisms to the new constitutional resolution refers to the fact that indigenous peoples did not take part in making it, and basically functioned as passive spectators (López Bárcenas 1998). This was partly because before the first half on the 1990s, most indigenous organisations and movements were 'seized' by the State and its authoritarian regime (Otero 2004:222).

Nevertheless, some popular and indigenous movements saw the Salinist rhetoric on legitimising indigenous peoples and their rights as an opportunity for action and to rebuild their identity (Aitken 1996:26). Accordingly, they took advantage of multicultural discourses and hybrid spaces to advance their own demands (Sieder 2006).

Despite the severe criticism of the centralist and neo-corporatist model, the Salinas´ administration enjoyed the necessary legitimacy and power for the rest of its term. Salinas also managed to gather a parliamentary majority to approve structural economic reforms that allowed him to develop the neo-liberal model without significant impediments (Gordillo 2006:73).[123] It was not until the indigenous armed uprising of the EZLN on the 1st of January 1994 –the same day that the 'victory' of Salinas' neo-liberal model was being confirmed by the enforcement of the NAFTA– that the crisis of the Mexican political system was unmasked. From that moment, the indigenous issue started to be part of the

[122] Multiple authors coincide that 'consultations around legislative changes' are normally highly manipulated because the different initiatives are presented as facts and little information is given on their possible effects; moreover, there is not a really democratic participation of organisations (Barabas 1996; Sieder 2006).
[123] There is a direct co-relationship between the increase of public resources and the increase of the support to the regime and vice versa. By 1992, with the extension of neo-populist measures, especially in the case of Pronasol, there was a considerable increase in votes for the PRI during intermediary federal deputy elections (Middlebrook 2004:19).

national agenda, and the indigenous movement gained unprecedented momentum in Mexico, a topic analysed in detail in the subsequent chapter.

CONCLUSIONS

Paradoxically, the introduction of neo-liberalism has contributed to unmasking the way in which the governing elites built the post-revolutionary State and made it work. The State was characterised by the informality of its institutions and control mechanisms. Specifically it was characterised by: the predominance of unwritten rules and pacts between elites to share power; a discretionary application of law in the case of socio-political opponents; the coercion of certain sectors to obtain representation and resources; electoral simulations at all levels; alliances with the local elites and *caciques* to guarantee the control of regions and states; and the use of illegal armed forces to avoid involving governmental armed forces.

The informality behind formal State institutions was exposed. Ironically, the fact that governmental institutions were based on informal mechanisms for the resolution of the imperfections of the system, led them into a vicious cycle that, as Fernando Salmerón argues, increasingly undermined them (Salmerón 2002:39). Hence, with the shift of the economic and political model towards neo-liberalism and the opening of the market, a State with weak structures and inefficient more than democratic political institutions was revealed. Therefore, the state apparatus was neither ready to face global competition nor internal challenges, yet alone interact with civil society and guarantee comprehensive rule of law for its citizens.

Since the adoption of a neo-liberal ideology, there have been two intimately related phenomena. On the one hand, because of the dismantling of the post-revolutionary state apparatus and its mechanisms, the new governing elite has not had the necessary capacities to transform certain old structures of the State or generate substitute mechanisms that allow them to control the different sectors of society in the current modernisation model. Thus, the governmental solution has been the strengthening and enhancement of the military coercive apparatus in order to maintain political stability and continuity in the new neo-liberal model in the country.

On the other hand, the economic policy inclined towards commercial opening and integration with the international market, has negatively affected the rural sector, it has also contributed to the 'awakening of social movements'. Both phenomena have been accompanied by violent reactions by the old allies of the post-revolutionary regime, especially local elites and/or *caciques* and the leaders of traditional PRI organisations who refuse to leave their privileges and local power behind. This has represented a serious challenge to the stability of different regions in the country, especially in the Southeast where there are still strong PRI bastions that have manipulated federalism and decentralisation to their convenience to justify their resistance to democratisation and economic modernisation.

President Salinas in particular, through different strategies for governmental legitimacy, sought to weaken corporate sectors and regional elites. However, as he only removed their powers and resources and did not create genuinely democratic formal institutions or social ties, he unavoidably facilitated the resistance of local powers, both legal and illegal, which

took advantage of spaces abandoned by the State and of the existing coercive apparatus, mainly in rural areas.

At the same time, as a result of the absence of formal institutions and mechanisms of dialogue between the government and the different social sectors, the State has more openly exerted repression against autonomous socio-political groups. This has been clearer in the case of organisations or individuals who oppose or criticise the imposition of neo-liberal economic measures and the building of a State that is perceived as excluding.

In the period of transition towards neo-liberalism, indigenous peoples in general were still subordinated to the dominance of old authoritarian control mechanisms and to Salinas' legitimising attempts of multiculturalism. However, changes stemming from the political openings and advances in national and international legislation regarding indigenous matters throughout the years have created many opportunities for their mobilisation and the defense of their rights. Actions in this sense have been useful as survival instruments in view of the greater abandonment of the State and the threats of the market to their resources and ways of life. All this has led them to assume a more active participation as organised indigenous peoples and, together with other social sectors that have also suffered from the excluding policies of the new economic model, are generating different alternatives in view of the imminent reconfiguration of the Mexican State as the following chapter analyses.

Chapter Four

From Neo-indigenism to Indianism: Multiple Approaches to the Reconfiguration of the State in the Southeast of Mexico

The cards have been dealt. The players see their hand and bet. Suddenly, some spectators that had been quiet amongst the public jump out and try to sit at the table. Everyone is surprised because nobody expected something like this to happen. The professional players feel uncomfortable because there is no room for any more players, only for them. However, neither the surprise of the spectators nor the discomfort of the other players distracts the intruders who want to play.

More surprises. The new players seem to be moving in the same direction, as if they were united with the objective of playing their own game. It was evident from the beginning when the professional players made every effort to refuse them a seat at the table and force them to remain as spectators. This time, they had a common cause and were pushing in the same direction, so they managed to find a place at the table. That is why it is expected that when the game starts they set up their own strategy to change the rules of the game and give everybody the opportunity to win.

FRANCISCO LÓPEZ-BÁRCENAS[124]

It has been in the Southeast of Mexico where the crisis of the Mexican State is most clearly seen in the neo-liberal era. This phenomenon has prevented the State from consolidating and legitimising itself and interacting in a peaceful way with society. It is precisely in that region where indigenous peoples have presented the biggest challenges to the process of transformation of the State, its control mechanisms and economic model that aims at incorporating the resources of the population into the global market. Such challenges have been expressed through a wide range of rebellions, from organised opposition against the building of dams in indigenous territories and the exercise of their autonomy, to the armed struggle to demand the building of a different State that genuinely recognises and respects the rights of indigenous peoples.

[124] Francisco López-Bárcenas (2006). 2006: Los juegos y las apuestas. La Jornada. México.

However, as this chapter analyses, the use of violence continues to be part of the still incomplete State building and modernisation processes in the Southeast of Mexico. This is because there has not been a deep change in the traditional structures of power and control. On the contrary, despite the political transition, such structures have been strengthened and violence is used more visible and frequently due to four main factors: a) the weakening or inoperability of corporate control mechanisms; b) the resistance of the local elites and caciques to the loss of power and privileges through transition; c) the continuous pressure of the national and international markets to incorporate natural and human resources that were previously protected or outside the market but have become necessary to maintain the dynamics of the globalising economic process; and d) the response of indigenous peoples, which has become more and more organised and articulated and, thanks to globalisation, these groups have rebuilt their collective identity and have given their rights a wider meaning.

This situation has been further complicated by an increase in organised crime and drug dealing, as well as the presence of irregular armed groups in the region that have occupied the spaces of power that the State has failed to fill. In turn, this has served as an excuse for the selective militarisation of civilian spheres. Consequently, the socio-political response of some rural organisations and communities that have been affected by this phenomeno has become more radicalised.

The Politics of the "Absent State" in the Southeast of Mexico

Historically, the central government and the governing elite have deliberately ignored the Southeast, instead deciding to privilege the North and Centre of the country, especially the urban areas (World Bank 2003:22). The poor penetration of state institutions in the Southeast was mainly due to its topography and its geographical isolation. However, this situation was subsequently prolonged for political reasons. Even during the administration of General Lázaro Cárdenas –when many *ejidos* and governmental resources were invested in agricultural production in the Southeast-, investment in production, loans and technology was mainly targeted at the North. In this region of the country, there are still agricultural businessmen with vast swathes of land and irrigation systems to grow agricultural products to export (Smith 1991:329). In contrast, in the Southeast of Mexico, production was traditionally based on a subsistence model, a model sustained in the form of *milpas* or small workable, yet temporary, plots of land (Barton and Merino 2003:129). Although it is true that in some areas the production of one or two export products was encouraged, this didn't cause the diversification of crops and limited certain local producers to the conditions of the international market (Katz 1991:80).

Likewise, from the 1940s when a "stabilising development" model was promoted based on significant public investment, 90% of government resources destined to agriculture were allocated to the North or Northeast of the country where most of the revolutionary families were located (Foley 1995:61). During those years, the Southeast was again marginalised and the population lived on subsistence agriculture and social assistance programmes that

had a paternalistic character (Cano and Cisneros 1980:141).[125] Therefore, the Southeast did not play a defining role in the industrialisation of the country, it was left in permanent conditions of poverty and its rural character remained (Meyer 1991:331). At the end of the 1970s, despite the discovery of oil resources in the South of the country, this situation did not change because the Southeast became just an area in which resources were exploited but the benefits were only seen in other regions of the country (World Bank 2003:19).

During the 1980s, with the accelerated introduction of structural adjustment measures, the economic integration into the global market through commercial agreements and the growing abandonment of the rural areas, deepened the gap between social classes in Mexico as well as the geographic and sectoral polarisation (Salas 2002:35). The big producers from the North remained the winners, with their strong ties to the global market. The losers were those small producers in the Southeast, who still today only have limited funds and technical capabilities and have to deal with the presence of different intermediaries (Bartra 1993:25-56; Kay 2004:243). This situation stems again from the governmental tendency to allocate resources in an uneven way to the different regions of the country, which was still the case in the 1990s. Despite the fact that in the Southeast 40% of the population was rural, between 1995 and 2000, the region received an average of 9% of the federal allowances for agriculture whilst four of the main states in the North and Centre of Mexico received 52%.[126]

[125] Some analysts think that during that period, the South provided cheap workers to ensure the agricultural modernisation of the North, and raw materials to ensure the industrialisation of the centre of the country (Cano and Cisnero 1980:141).
[126] Information derived from Dávila, Enrique et al. (2000) "El sur también existe: Un ensayo sobre el desarrollo regional de México", Secretaría de Economía, México cited in World Bank 2003: 29.

According to a report from the World Bank, when NAFTA and other agreements on economic integration came into force, the sectors that received the most benefits were the ones located closer to the Northern Border and those that have the strongest links with the US economy as well as those that produce intermediary goods. In contrast, in the Southeast, the effects have not been positive and even its contribution to the GDP decreased from 5.33 in 1993 to 4.94 in 2000.[127] Finally, the report concludes that the Southeast is not ready to integrate into the global market due to its inefficient system of communications, the low level of education amongst the population, poor infrastructure and the levels of productivity -including agricultural productivity- which is the main activity of the region and is still a subsistence one (Esquivel, Lederman et al. 2003:1-10).

However, the Southeast is becoming more and more relevant for the national elites and the transnational agents both economically and geo-strategically. Therefore, the government has promoted the development of mega-projects to build the necessary infrastructure required to dynamise the flow of resources to the global market and to attract investment in the region. Two of the most important projects are the *Transísmico del Istmo de Tehuantepec* and *the Corredor Biológico Mesoamericano*, both of which are a core part of the Plan Puebla Panamá (PPP) (Gómez 2001).[128] The projects give private investors a

[127] Manufacturing is the economic sector that has grown the most with NAFTA. However, the participation of the Southeast has decreased even in this sector. In 1993 it was 3.03% of the total manufacturing sector and by 1999 it decreased to 1.8% (Esquivel et al. 2003: 14).

[128] For a good analysis of the impact of the Proyecto del Itsmo de Tehuantepec on the populations of Oaxaca and Veracruz, the author recommends the article by Emanuel Gómez (2001) Megaproyectos, globalización y resistencia popular en el Itsmo de Tehuantepec. México. **2008:** http://www.geocities.com/chimalapasmx/articulos/mega_resist.htm. For more information on Plan Puebla Panamá and its impact on Chiapas and Guerrero see www.ciepac.org.

central role in their development and administration whilst the main task of the State is to build the necessary infrastructure for them to work (Call 2002:24; Benford 2004).[129]

Despite such modernising efforts, the governing elites are facing problems with the effective introduction and integration of the region into the global market for two major reasons: On the one hand, they face the persistence of challenges such as informality, corruption and *cacicazgo* that predominated in the past (Pearce 2001); and on the other hand, they face resistance on the part of increasingly organised indigenous groups seeking to avoid the legal or illegal incorporation of their lands and resources into an economic model that they perceived as foreign and excluding.

The Mexican Southeast: A Region of Great Contrasts and Complexity

Rational Capitalism versus Political Capitalism

In the Southeast, the incomplete process of State formation and capitalist development can be seen and old structures of production and social relationships persist or have only been slightly affected by the economic modernisation and democratic transition of the country (Beaucage 1998:23).

In order to explain the unfinished development of Mexican capitalism, researcher Gustavo Duncan makes a useful theoretical contribution, suggesting that the problem of economic development lies in the coexistence of two forms of capitalism in one State: on the one

[129] Projects have been harshly criticised by social and civil organisations because negotiations have been conducted amongst the elite in a secretive fashion and therefore have excluded the population that will potentially be affected by them (Call 2002; CIEPAC 2007).

hand, the rational, and on the other, the political. Duncan highlights that part of the state apparatus is ruled by rational capitalism,[130] which is developed predominantly in urban centres where internal markets have been built together with a modern productive sector with the possibility of integrating itself into the global economy in a legal form, as in the case of the North of Mexico. In parallel, political capitalism has developed, especially in rural underdeveloped areas, such as the Southeast of the country where it is based on the production of wealth through the inherent advantages of political processes, as imposed by sub national actors and due to the imperfect and restricted conditions in which it is developed. Such actors use violence or illegal means to make the system work (Duncan 2006:82-3).

In the Southeast of Mexico, the traditional methods of accumulating wealth by the local elites have been based on the super-exploitation of local producer´s and indigenous peoples. They have used informal systems of control, particularly clientelism, illegal means and direct violence, and have used private armed groups against any form of resistance or opposition, thus creating their own rules and manipulating the institutions of the State for their own benefit (Bartra 1993; Fox 1994:62; Joseph and Nugent 1994).

Throughout history, these local and informal powers, have created monopolies or oligopolies for local production, thus dominating the regional markets by offering expensive and lower quality products (World Bank 2006). This has impeded the “rational" development of the market. In Chiapas, for example, for many years the local elite has been able to maintain control over wealth and exclude the indigenous majority from its

[130] Rational capitalism refers to the system of production and economic exchange in an environment that is equal before the law with clear rules, an independent justice, dynamic market, the availability of capital and freedom of access and competition (Duncan 2006:82).

distribution by impeding political changes and reforms which threaten to jeopardise "their lands" (Benjamin 1989:xix). Similarly, in Guerrero, cacique chief Rubén Figueroa has blocked the building of a fast train from Mexico City to the tourist centre of Acapulco because his transportation business would be affected by it (Bartra 2000; Bartra 2000a:13).

Therefore, despite the signs of "enclaves of tourist development" with high technology and high investment in the Southeast, such enclaves are isolated centres surrounded by, and coexisting with, suburban and rural misery. This was the case in tourist hubs such as Ixtapa and Acapulco, in Guerrero, and Huatulco, in Oaxaca, which seem to practise rational forms of capitalism but in reality, their existence is supported by political capitalism.

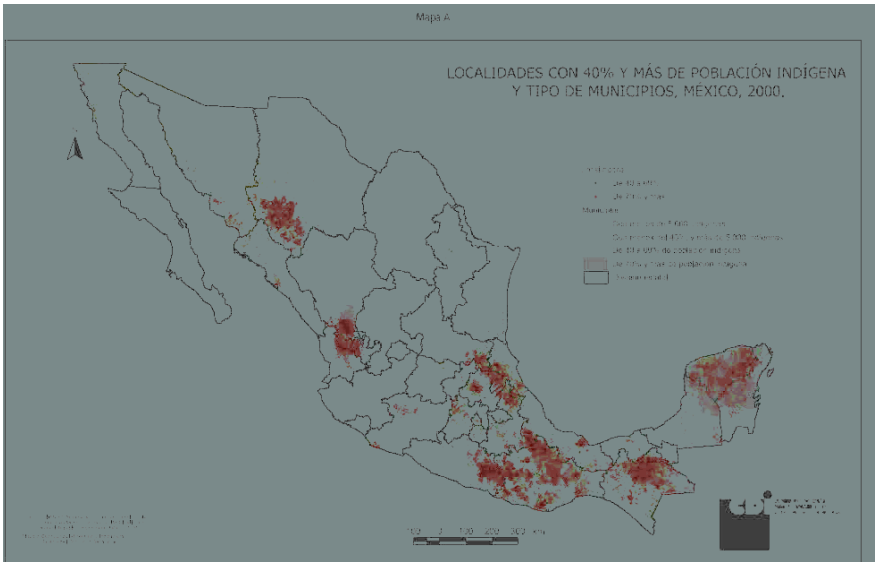
The Rich Diversity versus the Poverty in Ethnicity

As the following map shows, the Southeast of Mexico is a region of the country in which a significant percentage of the indigenous population is located, accounting for between 38 and 48% of the total. Oaxaca is the state with the widest diversity and the highest number of ethnic groups (18) which represent 56% of the total population of the state; in Chiapas there are seven groups that represent 32% of the population, and in Guerrero there are four ethnic groups that represent 17% of the indigenous population (CONAPO 2002; Carrasco, Davis et al. 2003:ii; Balboa 2005).[131]

Likewise, the Southeast is one of the wealthiest regions of the country in terms of natural resources. As was already mentioned, more than 50% of the whole country's water flows

[131] In Mexico, there are approximately 12.7 million indigenous peoples, representing almost 13% of the Mexican population. Around 78% of indigenous peoples are concentrated in seven states: Oaxaca, Veracruz, Chiapas, Puebla, Yucatán, Hidalgo and Guerrero (Conapo 2006, CDI 2008, Balboa 2005).

through those three states and 25% of the countries forests and jungles are concentrated there (World Bank 2003:22) as well as the widest variety of plants, animals and seeds (Harvey 2001:1051). Despite all this, the region has the lowest socioeconomic indexes in the country, which makes it the poorest and most marginalised area in Mexico (World Bank 2003:15; CONAPO 2006). Paradoxically, its rich natural resources have caused deep internal contradictions because instead of being a prosperous region, it has become one of the most unequal and violent areas of the country as the following section explains.



Indigenous Regions in Mexico (Serrano 2006:11)

Multiple Manifestations of Violence

The Southeast of Mexico has the highest levels of violence in the country, as measured in the number of homicides per year. Between 2000 and 2004, for example, in Guerrero and Oaxaca there was an average of 45.6 and 37.6 homicides respectively per 100.000 inhabitants which is significantly higher compared the national average of 18.5. Over the

last five years, Guerrero in particular, has been the state with the highest levels of violence (CONAPO 2002; CONAPO 2006).[132]

It is important to point out that in the Southeast there are complex forms of violence that affect various levels (Pearce 2001). They are mostly related to the huge inequality in the allocation of resources and with the struggle to get those resources. In this region, there are severe inter and intra communitarian conflicts that stem from the lack of efficiency of the government and the informal character of some of its actions. One of the most serious conflicts is the one caused by land border issues and the distribution of resources, especially water. In 2002, the *Secretaría de Gobernación* (Minister of Interior) stated that there were approximately 2,000 "red zones" or conflict lands in the country, most of them in the Southeast (Carrasco, Davis et al. 2003:11). It is important to remember that most lands in that region are communal lands and/or *ejidos*, so it has been difficult for market agents to advance the processes of privatisation and commercialisation.[133]

In addition, internal conflicts and tensions amongst indigenous populations in the Southeast have been intensified due to other external phenomena such as an increased presence of opposition parties, especially at the end of the 1980s; new religions that broke and challenged the monopoly of Catholicism over organisational structures in the different communities; young people educated abroad returning to their communities and sometimes becoming some form of "indigenous intelligence" a phenomenon that has caused disputes between generations and genders on the issue of how to manage and distribute power

[132] Curiously, the number of homicides in Chiapas has significantly decreased with an average of 17.3 per 1,000 inhabitants between 2000 and 2004, which is slightly under the national average (PAHO 1997; Conapo 2002; Conapo 2006).
[133] Guerrero has 48%, Oaxaca has 67% and Chiapas 49% of communal lands. Source: INEGI 2000, quoted in Carrasco 2003:10.

within those communities; and the presence of many irregular armed groups -from *guardias blancas* that protect big *hacendados* and diverse range of guerrillas that are reminiscent of the past, to paramilitary groups of gunmen linked to organised crime-, particularly linked to the illegal trafficking of people, arms and drugs in the region.

The actions of such armed groups have enabled the government to justify a selective presence of the army in the region. This has become part of the lives of the communities -mostly indigenous- and, in many cases, has filled them with fear and seriously violated human rights with impunity, something reported by many national and international organisations (Amnesty International 1998:16; ICHR 1998; Prodh 1998).

Even when there has been an effort to maintain the control mechanisms of the corporatist system at times when it has been weakening, violence or power was exercised in a disorganised way (Pearce 2001). Due to the growing lack of control in the regions, local powers or new illegal actors have imposed a new order (Pansters 1999:256-8). There has even been an intense confrontation within the PRI as a corollary of the struggle between different factions for control of the remnants of corporatist resources. In some cases, this has turned into grave acts of violence as the case study on Xochistlahuaca, Guerrero -which will be presented later- illustrates.

Authoritarian Enclaves versus Self-management Enclaves

The insufficient presence of state institutions in the Southeast combined with "the politics of laissez faire"[134] favoured the formation of two types of socio-political organisations. On the one hand, authoritarian enclaves in the hands of local elites and/or caciques, supported by complicit state authorities and members of the PRI, allowed a certain degree of political stability in the region for decades (Middlebrook 2004:34). This was achieved through informal mechanisms of control such as cronyism, clientelism and the use of violence in cases where there was some kind of resistance or expression of opposition to the *status quo*.

At the same time, the PRI regime allowed the creation of some forms of autonomy in which both *ejido* owners and indigenous peoples appointed their authorities and managed their affairs through their own institutions and in accordance with their own practices (Burguete C. 2004:243). The most relevant case is Oaxaca, where historically the State has had limited power over the appointment of municipal authorities (Velásquez 1999:292-3), and where there are important indigenous organisations. However, such organisations are fragmented and exhibit a more local character (Rubin 1994; Pearce 2001). In Guerrero, as a result of the intense repression during the dirty war in the 1970s and the strong presence of local caciques, most social organisations were faced with the closure of social spaces and therefore kept a low profile or acted clandestinely.[135] It is only recently that civil organisation have had a more significant presence in public spaces. In Chiapas, for many years, landowners, who were strongly supported by *guardias blancas* and other irregular armed groups, maintained control of the state by proxy and impeded the development of

[134] Term used by Aracelí Burguete 2004:243.
[135] Interview with Silvestre Pacheco, political analyst and writer from Guerrero, carried out in Zihuatajeno, Guerrero, 24 August 2004.

federal political reforms such as the land reform (Werner T. 1988:506; Watch/Americas 1997:32). Likewise, they pushed social political organisations towards the periphery, and made them assume a subordinate position and, in some cases, underground where they became clandestine organisations.

A common factor amongst the autonomous organisation in the Southeast is that they have been the target of threats and violence, both from individuals and state representatives when they have exceeded the political threshold of tolerance that the caciques or the local PRI established (Doe O'Neal 2003). Many of their social leaders and defenders of human rights that accompany these organisations have been harassed (Nistal and Priego 2007) and even assassinated with impunity.[136] Likewise, many of these organisations have suffered from the criminalisation of their political activity and accusations of belonging to guerrilla organisations. Hence, the State has intimidated them and forced them towards a more radical position in order to justify violence against them.

This situation has become more complicated with the weakening of the corporatist system because many new organisations that act outside the electoral arena and its regulations have emerged. For the government it is becoming increasingly difficult to control and manage such organisations, so it more frequently resorts to tactics of open repression (Stephen 1999:838).

In sum, in the Southeast, there are areas and social groups that remain trapped in sub national and authoritarian systems of governance or that have built enclaves or democratic

[136] The best-known case of politically motivated assassination is the instance of Digna Ochoa, who worked as a defender in cases in Costa Grande de Guerrero.

islands. In the case of the latter, the population has tried to encourage alternative models of economic development orientated around self representation and accountability from below (de la Peña 2006:289), such as in the case of Los Caracoles, Chiapas. Another example is the System of Security and Justice of the Community Police in the region of the Costa Chica-Montaña of Guerrero, which will be discussed subsequently.

Organisational Responses in the Southeast to the Neo-liberalisation of the Mexican State

In the Southeast of Mexico, there has been a multiplicity of responses to the implementation of neo-liberal policies and the transformation of the State from peasant and indigenous organisations. Some of these responses have had a relatively low impact and reflect a reaction to very specific local issues, while others have a national scope and include many regional organisations. These organisations have managed to unite a wide range of social leaders in order to oppose policies or economic trends that threaten the economic and cultural survival of rural communities (Wise, Salazar et al. 2003:8). There have even been movements that have proposed comprehensive reforms of the Mexican State and, together with other national or international organisations, sought an alternative model different from the neo-liberal globalising and hegemonic model. The heterogeneity of responses and the variety of methods of struggle of independent social organisations in the Southeast can be explained by the historical particularities of each state, but especially by the combination of different factors amongst which Rosalva Hernández highlights: their organisational history, their relationship with the State and their religious affiliation (Hernández C. 2001:99). Therefore, it is possible to find organisations that, for example, have decided to create a resistance movement to oppose the building of hydroelectric works

within their territories, such as the case of the movement created by the communities surrounding the river Balsas in Guerrero (1992).[137] Some others have built municipal ethnic-popular governments, as is the case in Juchitán, Oaxaca.[138] In other cases, some organisations have selected the armed struggle, as is the case with the EZLN in Chiapas. Due to the transcendence of the latter for indigenous organisations and movements, the following is a summary of the emergence of the EZLN in the national context and its impact.

The Armed Response of the EZLN[139]

On 1 January 1994, the same day that the NAFTA entered into force and Mexico was months away from becoming part of the OECD, the EZLN unexpectedly emerged in the national and international scene. The members of the Zapatista army, mostly indigenous peoples, had a limited military capacity but a high level of organisation and competence and were able to take four cities in Chiapas and declare war against the Mexican State. During the first thirteen days of the conflict, the federal government launched a frontal attack against the Zapatistas, leading to executions and serious human rights violations (Duhalde and Dratman 1994; International Commission of Jurists 1994). Due to strong national and international pressure, President Salinas called a unilateral ceasefire, offering an amnesty to the rebels and promoting the beginning of formal peace negotiations. Such negotiations started in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, with the participation of the

[137] For an excellent analysis of the movement of indigenous resistance against the building of a dam in the ford of the river Balsas, the author recommends the doctoral thesis of Jane Hindley (1996). Indigenous mobilisation, political reform and development in Mexico: The struggle of the Nahuatl people of the Upper Balsas, Guerrero. Department of Government. Essex, University of Essex.

[138] One of the best studies in this respect is that of Jerry Rubin's (1994). "COCEI in Juchitán: Grass-roots radicalism and regional history". Journal of Latin American Studies **26**: 109-1346.

[139] In order to deeper understand the causes of armed uprising of the EZLN, the author recommends Pablo González Casanova (1995) "Causas de la rebelión en Chiapas." Revista América Libre **10**, Buenos Aires.

National Commission of Intermediation, CONAI (Comisión Nacional de Intermediación) formed by renowned citizens that were accepted by both the EZLN and the government.

Since the uprising of the EZLN, it was possible to identify various reactions and formal and informal strategies from different subsequent PRI governments in order to weaken the Zapatista movement and other Southeast indigenous organisations. Massive resources were channelled towards the development of "social projects" in the region, together with the allocation of larger military resources (20,000 soldiers) (Ciment 2007).[140] Similarly, highly sophisticated special armed forces were augmented under the excuse of the struggle against the trafficking of arms and drugs, and they undertook an intense counter insurgency campaign in the region, hence serious violations of human rights were registered (Prodh 1998; Global Exchange 2001:64; Sierra Guzmán 2003:1).

However, none of the governmental strategies worked because Chiapas is still the poorest state in the country with the highest levels of marginalisation (CONAPO 2006) and continuous eruptions of violence, which has served to justify the federal governments excessive military presence in the region.

On top of this, PRI groups, caciques and local elites have reacted against the Zapatista rebellion and the consequent empowerment of indigenous organisations with the use of violence in order to protect their interests in the region, even creating private armed groups (Brown 1998:221; Stahler-Sholk 1998:12; Bartra 2002:19).

[140] It is hard to know the exact number of troops dispatched because the *Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional* (Sedena) is not obliged to publish such information (Américas 2006). Although maybe the number of military has decreased with time, their sophistication in the region has increased as the report of CIEPAC and Global Exchange indicates. This information can be found in www.ciepac.org and www.globalexchange.org.

The Impact of the EZLN's Uprising

The men and women of the EZLN taught us how to revalue our roots and strengthen our sense of future. Despite our willingness and our effort to seek acknowledgement, those who have monopolised the power and money in our country never saw us, heard us, and never gave us a place in this nation.

SALOMÓN MAXIMINO. [141]

The armed uprising of the EZLN is one of the most significant challenges that the Mexican State's neo-liberal restructuring project has had to face (Renner 1997:22). It not only contributed to unmasking the false image of a globally integrated and modern Mexico, but also showed the deeper and negated Mexico by the governing elites, akin to the one described by Guillermo Bonfil.[142]

Many analysts concur that the emergence of the EZLN was a breaking point for the indigenous peoples in Mexico and since then has triggered most of the qualitative and quantitative changes in the political transition of ethno-political organisations and movements.[143]

One of the most important consequences of the Zapatista uprising was to force the issue of indigenous rights at the heart of the national political discourse (Stephen 1999:825; Collier 2000; Esteva 2001; Harvey 2001; Otero 2003:249). As part of this research, it would be impossible to enumerate the complete list of effects of the armed uprising and the

[141] Salomón Maximino is a member of *Servicios del Pueblo Mixe, A.C*, and the quoted text corresponds to part of the discourse given during the visit of the *Otra Campaña Zapatista* to Oaxaca, on the 9th February 2006 (La Jornada 2006)

[142] Guillermo Bonfil (1987) México profundo: Una civilización negada, México, SEP-CIESAS.

[143] Amongst the most eminent analysts are Hernández 1994; Barabas 1996; Franco 1999; Regino 1999; Stephen 1999; Berger 2001; Esteva 2001; Sieder 2002; Dietz 2004; Otero 2004; Harvey 2005; Yashar 2005, Hernández C. 2006.

subsequent Zapatista mobilisation. However, three of the most significant ones will be discussed: the dignifying of the "indigenous people"; the generation of indigenous movements of national (and international) scope; and the struggle for the reconfiguration of the Mexican State.

The Dignifying of the Indigenous People

Since the Zapatista uprising, many indigenous peoples have experienced a re-evaluation of their "indigenous being" and have managed to see themselves as political subjects who play a part in the rebellion against the government and the unjust economic model (Barabas 1996:2-6). In fact, there has been a process of 'reindigenisation' (Hale 2002:486), through which indigenous peoples have become self-empowered by reaffirming their ethnic-racial identity and have decided to act as a valuable and distinct sector (Canessa 2006:254). This way, they have used their collective identity as a strategic resource to articulate their demands for their rights (van Cott 2003:228).

Even analysts, such as Araceli Burguete, have explored the emergence of an Indianism, understood as an indigenous identity built by indigenous peoples and characterised by the exercise of their autonomous actions (Burguete C. 1999:260). Such identity reconstruction has managed to break with the tradition of being imposed from above or from outside that used to dominate in the past.

It is difficult to quantify the consequences of the EZLN uprising. However, since it emerged in the political scene, the number of organisations and mobilisations that highlight their own ethnic component has increased considerably. Furthermore, a significant number

of the activities undertaken by organised indigenous peoples –such as land expropriation, declaration of autonomous municipalities, local, national and international mobilisation in defence of collective rights and the recent public appearance of other armed groups calling themselves indigenous- have mushroomed.[144]

It is important to point out that the EZLN is neither the first nor the only organisation that has sought to mobilise indigenous peoples in Chiapas and across Mexico in general. Likewise, not every indigenous community and organisation opted for armed struggle as a means to survive (Bühler 2000:137). Many did not share the Zapatistas' methodology even though they recognised their demands. Many others saw the rebellion as a reaffirmation of their own dignity whilst yet others still opted for even more radical option than those of the EZLN, such as supporting or becoming part of the Popular Revolutionary Army, EPR (Ejército Popular Revolucionario)[145] (Hernández C. 2001:99). However, the Zapatista mobilisation transcended local thematic particularities, giving way to indigenous movements that were national in scope and independent of the government, sometimes with the objective of participating in an alternative nation-State project as the subsequent section indicates.

[144] The most recent one took place in April 2000 in Oaxaca as the Ejército Revolucionario Indígena de Liberación Nacional (Sarmiento 2001:239).

[145] The EPR is a guerrilla conglomerate (including the *Partido de los Pobres*, founded by Lucio Cabañas) who were particularly active during the 1960s and 1970s. The EPR appeared publicly on the 28th of July 1996 when the first anniversary of the massacre of Aguas Blancas took place. Since then, it declared war against the Mexican State and manifested their intentions to take over power. Little is known about its internal organisation, but it is thought that it has support in urban areas and its headquarters are in Mexico City. Even though, it has implemented actions in rural areas of Guerrero and Oaxaca. Recently, it has exhibited a significant presence in other states of the country where it has demonstrated military capability to attack strategic targets such as oil pipelines.

The New Dimension of the Indigenous Movement in Mexico [146]

In Mexico, until well into the 1990s, there was a tendency to negate indigenous peoples, something reflected in the late recognition of their rights in comparison with other Latin American countries. Then indigenous organisations did not have an impact upon public opinion yet alone the Mexican State.[147] There were few indigenous organisations with national scope, and most of them were under the tutelage of a paternalistic State and exhibited a strong social and political representation of peasant character (Otero 2004:222).[148]

It is important to remember that from the beginning of the post-revolutionary period in 1929 until the 1970s the peasantisation of indigenous peoples in the corporatist PRI system was promoted. In the mid 1980s, as part of the new policies of State legitimisation and control, indigenous organisations such as the National Congress of Indigenous Peoples, CNPI (Congreso Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas) were created and funded "from above" and linked to the official party that co-opted the emerging independent organisations and kept them in line with the government (Regino 1999:6). In the 1980s, the discomfort of the indigenous peoples was mainly expressed through peasant organisations because the former had not yet assumed an ethnic identity. Their demands were linked to the land and were localised (Dietz 2004:47-8).

[146] For a deeper perspective on indigenous movements in Mexico see López Bárcenas, Francisco (2006) Rostros y caminos en los movimientos indígenas en Mexico en Beatriz Canaval et al., (coordinators). Diversidad rural, estrategias económicas y procesos culturales. Plaza y Valdéz, UAMX, México, pp. 269-291.
[147] Even in the context of the discussion on constitutional changes recognising Mexico as a pluralistic country on 1992, the INI contended that there is an "absence of consolidated nation indigenous organisations that could produce mobilisation and debate on the issue of Convention 169 of the ILO" (Hindley 1996:231).
[148] Therefore, as Luis Hernández Navarro argues, the history of the indigenous movement in Mexico is based on more than two decades of agrarian, civic, political and economic organisation (Hernández N. 1998:8).

Then some indigenous organisations became influenced by urban dissident groups, some of them survivors of the dirty war of the 1970s that migrated to the countryside looking for a new "revolutionary subject".[149] Amongst those groups, the Trotskyist proletariat movement and the Maoist mass movement had a particularly significant influence in some of the local producer organisations in the Southeast (Dietz 2004:47).

Some indigenous-peasant groups acquired better support from Non Governmental Organisations, some of them linked to the Catholic Progressive Church that helped them with advice on productive techniques, human rights, the environment and reproductive rights, amongst others. In the 1990s, those groups became more influenced by opposition political parties at the local level (Velásquez 1999:294), and by key events at the international level with strong indigenous content and claims (Hindley 1996).

Amongst the international events which favoured the domestic acknowledgement of indigenous peoples and attracted a higher degree of scrutiny under the gaze of global public opinion were, *inter alia*: a) the preparations for the commemoration of 500 years of the "Meeting of two worlds" in 1992; b) the UN "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992; c) the 1993 Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the proclamation of 1993 as International Year of Indigenous Peoples; and d) the entry into force of Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

However, the armed uprising of the Zapatistas in 1994 was the most important catalyst for the new dimension of indigenous movements in Mexico, which was supported by the aforementioned national and international events. In order to systematically enhance the

[149] Harvey 1990, cited in Dietz 2004:47.

expansions and strengthening of such movements, the methodological proposal of political scientist Deborah Yashar will be used. Yashar suggests that there are three principle factors that explain the development of the Latin American indigenous phenomenon of the 1990s: motive; opportunity; and capacity. The author argues that these three factors are necessary to understand why, when and where indigenous movements emerge and why they are strong in some countries and weak in others (Yashar 2005).[150]

Motives

In Mexico, the imposition of the neo-liberal model and subsequent constitutional reforms that served to pave the way for the commercial opening of the market (especially the modification of Article 27, which allowed the privatisation of collective lands) was the catalyst, which pushed the Zapatistas towards an armed uprising. These also generated the EZLN support from other indigenous organisations, which galvanised around it, particularly at the movement's beginning. Such organisations considered that those reforms directly threatened their means of social, economic and cultural reproduction. They also represented the definitive rupture of the social pact between the Mexican State and indigenous peoples, which had prevailed for more than seventy years.

Opportunity

During the 1990s, there were important national and international incentives that triggered the indigenous peoples movements in Mexico. One of the most important was broad

[150] The author considers that in Mexico there are significant regional and indigenous movements (Yashar 2005:56).

international legislation, expressed mainly in Convention 169 of the ILO that has become a key reference for those peoples in their struggle for their rights. Similarly, at the national level there were positive constitutional reforms such as articles 4 and 115. There was also a process of political liberalisation and administrative decentralisation stemming from the crisis of internal legitimacy amidst the regime and the pressures of international actors on the Mexican State. Even when they originated "from above", indigenous groups have exploited and reinvented these changes "from below" in order to rebuild their identity, generate their own discourse, strengthen organisational structures and traditional authorities and state their rights and demands to governmental actors (Aitken 1996:26; Powell 1996; Fox 2000:202; Sieder 2006). Hence, organisational processes and indigenous movements have benefited from heightened decision making power and greater resources than in the past (Assies 1999:34).

Capacities

The closer contact with national and international allies as a product of the globalisation of communications has allowed indigenous organisations that were relatively weak to use their alliances and global fora in order to place pressure upon state actors and broaden support for their struggle. This has promoted their activities, leading to improved interaction with the State and its representatives (van Cott 2003:229). Likewise, their attendance at international events and the international network of contacts have allowed them to exchange experiences and legal forms of struggle that would later be assimilated into their own processes of mobilisation, creating what Rachel Sieder labels "hybrid spaces" and "legal transplants" (Sieder 2006).

The Zapatista movement has been strengthened the most by national and international alliances and especially thanks to its participation in different networks, which has avoided its portrayal by the Mexican state as isolated and localised (Collier 2000:25; Hale 2004:20). Such participation has enabled it to transcend ethnic and class identities and to lead international demands for social justice and democracy, which in turn has generated more social and international support.[151] For these reasons, for some analysts, the Zapatista movement has become an iconic in the struggle against excluding globalisation and for the development of alternative policies (Fernández C 2004:188).

Apart from the Zapatistas, there have been other indigenous movements at the national level. Two of the most important are the National Plural Indigenous Assembly for Autonomy, ANIPA (Asamblea Nacional Indígena Plural por la Autonomía) and the National Indigenous Council, CNI (Congreso Nacional Indígena).[152] The ANIPA emerged in 1992 as part of the movement of five hundred years of resistance, joining it to develop a project of struggle for the right to autonomy through the promotion of autonomous plural and ethnic regions that was inspired by the Nicaraguan experience (de la Peña 2006:288).

The movement has been formed by different ethnic representatives from different parts of the country. Since the EZLN emerged, the assembly has supported it and its demands for a State reform although it ended up following a different path as subsequently demonstrated.

[151] An opinion shared by Nash 1995:26; Ross 1997; Stephen 1999:85; Berger 2001:152; Esteva 2001:123; Otero 2003:123; Harvey 2005:13; Canessa 2006.

[152] Another indigenous movement is the *Frente Independiente de Pueblos Indios* (FIPI), created in 1987 as a "space to search for indigenous alternatives and solutions for indigenous peoples". Since its beginnings, it has struggled for the creation of regional pluriethnic autonomies. In 1991, the *Consejo Mexicano 500 Años de Resistencia Indígena, Negra y Popular* emerged, and played a relevant role in the national indigenous protests against the celebrations of 500 years of the meeting of two worlds (Ruiz 1999:28).

The CNI was formed in 1996 to support "all the demands of Zapatista insurgents" (CNI 1997). Therefore, their main objective is to promote the accords of San Andrés Larráinzar, and it has managed to gather 500 representatives from 36 of the 57 ethnic groups of the country (Fox 2000:201). Since then, it has become a consolidated national force that supports the constitutional acknowledgement of indigenous rights (van Cott 2003:228), as well as a permanent space for indigenous peoples to meet and develop a dialogue. The CNI is not a formal organisation and does not have any structure of leaders; rather it is considered an assembly and a network (López- Barcena 2006).

The context in which the different national indigenous movements split will be analysed in detail later. Nonetheless, such a rupture was caused by differences in key topics such as the concept and exercise of autonomy, the kind of relationship and interaction with the government and the level of indigenous representation in the eyes of the government and society in general.

The Struggle for the Reconfiguration of the Mexican State

The Zapatista movement has not only represented a critical opposition to neo-liberal modernisation, but it is intended to become an alternative proposal to it (Beaucage 1998:4). Therefore, from the beginning of the peace talks with the Mexican government and the Indigenous National Congress – that they summoned in 1996- the EZLN placed emphasis on the necessity of reconfiguring the Mexican State or otherwise they suggested "everything will remain the same" (Harvey 2005:16).

The Zapatistas led the first movement, exogenous to the national political elite, which insisted on the necessity of an integral reform of the State. They not only sought the formation of a new government that responded more sensitively to their demands, but also invited profound reflection on the nature of the State and the need to represent the economic and cultural diversity of a State such as Mexico (Stephen 1999:825; Collier 2000:22; Esteva 2001:143; Hale 2004:20).[153] Similarly, as part of its political innovation, the Zapatistas requested that the reform generated a new social pact wherein the limited concept of citizenship and formal democracy that predominated in the existing State model are broadened (Berger 2001:160; Esteva 2001:125; Hernández C. 2006:127).

The process of negotiation between the Mexican government and the EZLN was suspended for many months due to the proximity of the presidential elections of July 1994 and the subsequent change of administration in December of that year. The negotiations were resumed in February 1996 and the Zapatista movement again insisted on the necessity of a comprehensive State reform. In order to generate support for this proposal, it called different social sectors to mobilise. The reform of the State was seen by the Zapatistas as the main guarantee for the recognition of their collective rights. This would give them a higher degree of political representation, broader participation in diverse matters, which pertained to them as well as an enhanced ability to guide governmental policies in their favour and in support of indigenous communities (Ventura Patiño 2006a:155).

[153] One of the main criticisms of Zapatismo by leftwing groups is that as it does not pursue the acquisition of power, it has failed in its struggle. For this reasons, some critics argue that the proposal to change the world became only a "moral slogan" that did not represent a threat to the dominant group neither in Mexico nor in other countries (Tariq Alí, cited by Harvey 2005:14). However, other authors state that it is precisely because they do not harbour ambitions of power and want to generate alternative forms of participation that some sectors have come together and support the EZLN´s demands and struggles (Berger 2001:156).

The final result of the negotiations were the accords of San Andrés Larráinzar, which formed the basis for a dialogue with state representatives that produced the initiative of law of the Commission of Concord and Pacification (*Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación*) known as the Cocopa Law. However, as discussed below, the new administration gave continuity to the neo-liberal model of the State and was prone to use of repression against social protests and impeded the consolidation of the Zapatista proposal. This was exacerbated by the military harassment, the low intensity war against Zapatistas´ base support communities, the racism and the elitism of the political class, as well as the internal divisions in indigenous organisations and movements.

THE RESPONSE OF THE ZEDILLISTA REGIME

Strong Military Institutions, Weak Social Political Institutions

PRI candidate Ernesto Zedillo was elected president of Mexico for the period 1994-2000. However, the electoral process that brought him to power took place amidst a bloody dispute within the political elite, which was marred by levels of violence that were unprecedented since the Revolution. Notably this included the murder of several eminent politicians, including Luis Donaldo Colosio who was the original PRI presidential candidate for the 1994 elections and José Francisco Ruiz Massieu who was the former governor of Guerrero and the Federal Deputy and General Secretary of the PRI National Executive Committee at the time of his death. The visible struggle amongst hard-line, traditionalist sectors and the reformists of the official party showed that, as political scientist Denisse Dresser contended, the PRI "was at war with itself" (Dresser 1994:22).

Furthermore, the Zedillista regime started its government on the wrong foot because it inherited a severe economic crisis that manifested during the first month of its administration, a crisis which became widely known as "December's mistake". This crisis caused a heavy devaluation of the Mexican peso and notable financial instability.

As a consequence, President Zedillo exerted power devoid of the necessary legitimacy. Accordingly his government exhibited a growing tendency to use State violence in order to resolve social and political problems (Gledhill 1998:22). In addition, during the six years of the Zedillo administration, the violence within the political elite reached unprecedented levels as well as the violence caused by the advance of organised crime which enabled the government to politically justify the militarisation of national security and an increase in the budget allocated to the army (Stephen 1999:826). All this took place amidst strong yet conflicting international and national pressure.

The government of Zedillo became increasingly powerful militarily, but its social and political institutions were weak and malfunctioning to the extent that they were unable to politically discipline the local elites, caciques and their private militias. Two of the most eminent examples, due to the widespread publicity at the national and international level, were the massacres of Aguas Blancas, in Guerrero,[154] and that of Acteal, in Chiapas.[155]

The massacre in Aguas Blancas was one of the bloodiest and weakly prosecuted examples of the way in which the regional caciques with complicit of state authorities applied force

[154] For a deeper perspective on the topic of the massacre of Aguas Blancas, see: www.thahui.com/thahui2/aguas.htm

[155] For more information on the massacre of Acteal, see the report of the Centro Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, titled: "Entre el duelo y la lucha". http://www.frayba.org/archivo/informes/981201_acteal_entre_el_duelo_y_la_lucha_frayba.pdf

against social and producers groups that had participated in organised mobilisation. On the 28th of June 1995 in the valley of Aguas Blancas, motorised and judiciary police of the state of Guerrero intercepted a bus within which was a group of peasants who were going to Coyuca de Benítez to sell their produce along with several members of the peasant Organisation Sierra del Sur (OCSS) who were going to Atoyac de Álvarez to attend a protest demanding fertilizers and reproaching the government for the abandonment of their communities.[156] Before arriving, the peasants were cornered and fired upon, leaving seventeen dead and nineteen seriously injured.

At first, the state accused the peasants of being affiliated with irregular armed groups and carrying weapons. However, independent video footage demonstrates that the peasants were unarmed and offered no resistance upon their interception and subsequent shooting. Furthermore, the National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH), revealed evidence of state responsibility in the shooting and reported a serious irregularity in early official findings intended to avoid subsequent action against those responsible. At least eight high-ranking officials were suspended and the governor, Rubén Figueroa, was forced to resign after being accused of the intellectual mastermind of the massacre. However, he was neither incarcerated nor punished for his actions (Doe O'Neal 2003:41).

The events and impunity with which the case was handled spread fear and indignation amongst the population and organised social groups whose position toughened and discourse radicalised. Some social activists even joined different clandestine armed organisations after the massacre (Montemayor 2007).

[156] Informe de Amnistía Internacional sobre la Matanza de Aguas Blancas 1995, quoted in Doe O´Neal 2003:41.

On the 22nd of December 1997, in the massacre of Acteal, 45 indigenous tzotziles were murdered. They belonged to the organisation *Las Abejas* that supported the EZLN although disagreeing with their tactics. The perpetrators belonged to a paramilitary group called *Paz y Justicia,* which had proven links to PRI state leaders, local police and the military (Amnesty International 1998; Stahler-Sholk 1998; Stephen 1999:828; Olney 2004:1-2). So far, the intellectual masterminds behind the killings have not been sanctioned and both the authorities and some intellectuals have argued that it was an intercommunity conflict.[157]

Therefore, the different manifestations of rural violence and the independent actions of the caciques and legal and illegal powers generated an atmosphere of uncertainty that enabled the federal government to justify the growing militarisation of those regions (Knight 1996:16). As a result, maintaining order and internal security increasingly became the task of the military apparatus (Gledhill 1998:10-4; Camp 2005:XII). In this sense, under the pretext that the levels of violence were growing, President Zedillo commanded the army to administer, reinforce and/or compliment the police forces (Sierra Guzmán 2003:8). This was evidenced by the increase in federal resources destined for the *Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (SEDENA)* that was the equivalent of 5% of the total budget when previous governments had only allocated between 2 and 3% (Camp 1999:131). This does not include the money provided by the US government for the purposes of preventing drug trafficking and organised crime.[158]

[157] Ten years after the massacre, political analyst Héctor Aguilar Camín has presented this argument in 2007 in different editions of the magazine *Nexos*, triggering a fervent national and international debate.
[158] For more information on US military support for Mexico, see: Adam Isacson and Joy Olson. *Just the Facts 2001-2002*. Latin American Working Group and Center for International Policy.

Such a budget increase resulted in a growth of human and material resources within the army, which allowed for the possibility to have a more sophisticated military and enhanced performance. In a report on Mexico, the *School of the Americas Watch* (SOA Watch), an American civil organisation responsible for monitoring the US government's support to foreign militaries, noted that during the Zedillista period the number of Mexican army officials sent to the School of the Americas in the US (now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, SOA/WHINSEC) to receive military training increased dramatically.[159] During the first 49 years of the military agreement between the Mexican and the American governments, only 766 Mexican students were trained in the school. However, between 1996 and 1997, 333 members of the Mexican army were trained there, and by 1998 this increased to 1,177 (SOAWatch 2007). The Mexican government and army have justified this increase by arguing that it was necessary to reinforce their role in the "War on Drugs". However, the SOA Watch report states that in 1997 only 10% of the Mexican students attended courses related to anti-narcotics whereas most of them focused on military intelligence training (SOA Watch: 2007).

The Southeast of Mexico, particularly those marginalised regions principally inhabited by indigenous peoples, has been highly affected by the growing militarisation of the territory. Between 1995 and 1999, approximately 60,000 soldiers were concentrated in the region of Los Altos de Chiapas, which is equivalent to almost one per every three to four inhabitants (García de León 1995:12; Stephen 1999:828). Similarly, in the state of Guerrero, the size of the military presence increased notably in rural regions. The excuse for this was the

[159] The School of the Americas has been criticised internationally because militaries from several different Latin American countries that have committed serious violation of human rights against social and political leaders have been trained there. At least 18 high-ranking SOA/WHINSEC graduates have had a key role in attacks on civilians in Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca. One of them, Juan López Ortiz, directed the troops that perpetrated the massacre of 1994 in the market of Ocosingo, Chiapas; as part of this regrettable fact, members of the army carried out the execution of Zapatista members that had been caught (SOA Watch 2007).

application of the Law on Weapons and Explosives after the emergence of the EPR in 1996, and its subsequent division into the Revolution Army of the Insurgent Peoples, ERPI (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente) in 1998 (Sipaz 2008).[160] This served as an excuse to detain the leaders of popular organisations by accusing them of belonging to armed groups (Gledhill 1998:27).

Furthermore, as a consequence of the overwhelming military presence in rural areas of the Southeast, many national and international civil organisations (Sipaz 2008) reported the violations of human rights, some of them left unpunished (Amnesty International 1998:16; Doe O'Neal 2003:8). Following a visit *in situ* in 1998 to areas of high indigenous concentrations, the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) reported that during the growing militarisation of those territories there were serious violations such as restrictions on the free movement of peoples and the exercise of trade, the disruption of the previously tranquil region and isolated cases of violations of the rights to life and the integrity of people and property (ICHR 1998). Similarly, in its 2000 report, the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations denounced after visiting Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca that "the militarisation of indigenous populations and the growing use of the army to carry out the functions of the police has generated fear and violations of human rights amongst indigenous communities" (LaJornada 2000).

[160] For a deeper understanding of the EPR and the ERPI, see the various publications of José Lonfredo, expert in armed movements in Latin America from the Centro de Documentación de los Movimientos Armados www.cedema.org

The Zedillista Crossroad in the Face of International Pressure

The process of Mexico's economic integration into the global economy left the Zedillo government at a crossroads. On the one hand, multilateral organisations such as the UN and the World Bank intensified monitoring in the country and made their support conditional upon Mexico's demonstration of competent governance in matters related to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as well as important reforms which would modernise the political and judiciary systems (Lachenal 2006:4; Sieder 2006). On the other hand, the Zedillo government was subject to significant pressure from different Mexican and transnational investors, seeking to guarantee the development of the neo-liberal model and control over the EZLN which they felt represented a "threat to their interests" and the stability of the country (Renner 1997:21).

One of the most paradigmatic examples of these pressures is the recommendation to "eliminate the EZLN" made by some American bankers to Zedillo, which was leaked to *the Independent*.[161] This could be one of the reasons that explain why the Mexican president ignored the truce forged with the insurgent movement and attacked the Zapatistas on the 5th of February 1996 in order to finish the conflict.

National and international organisations immediately rejected such violent action and demanded the Mexican government comply with human rights laws and respect the indigenous peoples (Doe O'Neal 2003:24-5). These pressures forced the Federal

[161] Newspaper article, *The Independent* the 5th of March 1995, titled: "US Bank leak out recommendation to Mexican government to eliminate EZLN", cited in Fernández 2004:121.

government to stop its military offensive and sign the Law for Dialogue, Conciliation and Dignified Peace in Chiapas in October of that same year.

The Accords of San Andrés Larráinzar: The First Attempt at a New Relationship between the State and Indigenous Peoples[162]

The accords of San Andrés Larráinzar were the result of the negotiation process between the EZLN and the Mexican government that began on the 16th of February 1996. Since then they have become a permanent reference for indigenous peoples in their struggle for their rights, and their importance is not only based on their content and scope, but also on the way they were conceived. At first, the negotiations between the aforementioned parties gave indigenous peoples -represented in this case by the Zapatistas- the opportunity to participate in the debate on the way in which the State should be reconfigured and on how indigenous rights should be included in the accords (Postero and Zamosc 2004:9). Additionally, their rights were widely discussed within the Zapatista indigenous communities and in different public forums with other indigenous and non-indigenous groups, so their ideas went further than the initial proposals of the EZLN.

The Accords of San Andrés laid emphasis on two main elements for indigenous organisations: 1) the official acknowledgment of the right of indigenous peoples to political and economic autonomy in their communities and 2) the right to control their own natural resources and collectively enjoy their territories (Stahler-Sholk 1998:13).

[162] For a deeper understanding of the judicial implications of the San Andrés Accords, the author recommends Miguel Angél Sámano et al. (2000). Los Acuerdos de San Andrés Larraízar en el contexto de la Declaración de los Derechos de Pueblos Americanos. X Jornada Lascasianas Internacionales, Antigua, Guatemala.

Once they were agreed by the conflicting parties, these political accords gave way to national legislation regarding indigenous matters.

The Initiative of the Cocopa Law

The Cocopa law is also the result of peace negotiations in Chiapas. The commission was formed by a legislative representative of each national political party and was in charge of systematising the accords of San Andrés in order to generate a proposal for national legislation on the rights of indigenous peoples that was to be evaluated by both parties in conflict and subsequently presented before the Congress for their revision and approval.

The proposal for the Cocopa Law was supported by the main indigenous organisations and movements across the country because it was based on Convention 169 of the ILO. Even though it did not incorporate all the points within the San Andrés Accord, the EZLN accepted it as a first step towards reconciliation and the peace process.[163] However, the Executive power received the proposal with some ambiguity and finally rejected it in November 1996. President Zedillo justified this decision, arguing that the recognition of the right of indigenous communities to their autonomy was a threat to the unity of the State and would take the country towards balkanisation (Franco 1999:142; Stephen 1999:826) and even to a subsequent surge towards secession (Otero 2004:231; Harvey 2005:14).

Nevertheless, for anthropologist and Zapatista advisor Gilberto López y Rivas, there were four main reason for the government to be in non-compliance with the San Andrés Accords: the first was that the dominating ideology of the regime did not accept a judicial

[163] Francisco López Bárcenas notes that in October of 1995 in the Foro Nacional de Cultura y Derecho Indígena around 500 representatives of 25 groups approved it (López Bárcenas 2004:214).

framework that would go further than the established current liberal rights of citizens, arguing that everyone is (and should be) equal before the law. Secondly, autonomy would have broken the corporatism that the State party required to control the peoples. Thirdly, the accords went against the free expropriation of natural and strategic resources, giving indigenous peoples the right to autonomously administer their lands and territories. Finally, accepting deep constitutional reforms regarding indigenous matters would entail recognising the triumph of the EZLN and indigenous peoples (Sámano 2000:7).

What is relevant is that approving the law of Cocopa and the creation of efficient mechanisms for its implementation would have changed the nature of the Mexican State (Hernández Navarro and Carlsen 2004:440). The indigenous demands implied substantial reforms to the constitution in order to genuinely integrate the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples, such as autonomy, land reform and political participation. However, the political elites were not ready to compromise and go against the logic of the neo-liberal model and its tenets of privatisation, incorporation into the global market and reduction of the functions of the state apparatus.

In view of the negative response of the State authorities, the Zapatistas together with other indigenous movements and organisations decided to continue to foster the accord of San Andrés as expressed in the Cocopa Law but this time on their own. At unparalleled event in Mexico, on the 21st of March 1999, there was a national consultation for the acknowledgment of the rights of the indigenous peoples and "the end of the war of extermination", which was organised by Mexican civil society groups under the petition of the EZLN. Three million people participated and 95% expressed support for the Cocopa initiative (Sámano, Durand et al. 2000:8; Esteva 2001:141). This is especially relevant in a

country where it was not customary to consult the population and less so to do this in a fashion independent of the government and political parties.

The subsequent defeat of the PRI in the presidential elections of 2000 and the promises during the campaigns of the main opposition candidates generated a favourable atmosphere to approve the Cocopa proposal for the next period of government. Therefore, indigenous and civil organisations reactivated their protest groups and a Zapatista commission even travelled all over the country, seeking consensus and went to Congress in order to explain the importance of this legal initiative for indigenous peoples as a first step towards reconciliation and the beginning of a new relationship between the State and indigenous groups.

However, as the subsequent chapter analyses, indigenous peoples faced significant repression and the criminalisation of social protest, suffering the abandonment of the government and its failure to comply with promises together with extensive harassment at the hands of armed police, local bosses and irregular armed groups in response to the their rebellion.

CONCLUSIONS

Until 1 January 1994, when the EZLN emerged as an armed group, indigenous peoples had been politically marginalised in the construction process of the Mexican nation State. Since then, it has become one of the key challenges to those who support a neo-liberal economic model and the imminent restructuring of the state apparatus.

The Southeast of Mexico, abandoned by the State for many decades and left to the administration of the local elites and caciques, has gained relevance in the era of neo-liberal globalisation for two main reasons: firstly, its geo-strategic localisation and great diversity of resources; secondly, because it is a region where initiatives for the reformation of the State are emerging together with a new concept of the nation and a serious questioning of the neo-liberal model of modernisation.

As never before in the history of Mexico, the Zapatistas, alongside the indigenous peoples that organised around them, played a very active role in the political transition of the country. They placed their demands for their rights and the reformation of the State on the political agenda, and managed to form a movement that was national, arguably even international in scope. This was strengthened by the political opening towards others networks in the world both civil and indigenous and by national and international legislation. From the beginning, the Zapatista movement understood that the reconfiguration of the State was of paramount importance in enabling indigenous groups to enjoy their collective rights and occupy a dignified place in the nation. Hence, they have insisted on the necessity of a new social pact that broadens the concept of citizenship and democracy that better represents a plural Mexico.

Nevertheless, the demands of organised indigenous peoples represent a genuine challenge to the governing elite because they contrast with the neo-liberal logic of privatisation and individualisation of social life. In this regard, the most challenging ones would be: the self-determination of their own territories to facilitate collective access to their own lands; control of their natural resources in order to achieve a State where they could reproduce

their cultural and political identity; and the generation of alternative systems of social production and the establishment of their own justice and decision making systems.

Additionally, the regime has viewed with fear the growing independent mobilisation of indigenous peoples and has reacted by limiting it. Even organised groups that have not been co-opted or reintegrated into the state apparatus have been victims of high levels of violence from the State and local elites or caciques. This has in turn radicalised the responses of such groups that range from the exercise of *de facto* autonomy to armed struggle.

One of the biggest problems for the consolidation of the nation State in Mexico is that there are regions such as the Southeast of the country were all structures of power and production prevail without being changed. The local elites and the caciques refuse to abandon their privileges and the informal mechanism with which they exert control over their territories. Therefore, it can be foreseen that the transition in the Southeast would be slow and accompanied by spurts of violence stemming from the struggle for power and the weakness of political institutions and their inability to mediate between the different social sectors and solve conflicts in a peaceful way.

In view of this crisis and the inability of the State to drive an economically globalising model using the same political instruments they used in the past, the governing elite will increasingly resort to a resource that is still secure: the use of the State's coercive apparatus.

In sum, the tensions in the Mexican Southeast are worsening due to: the inefficiency or lack of governmental response; the resistance of the local elites to change; the pressure of

transnational agents to free resources for the consumption of the global market; demands of respect and self-determination of indigenous peoples that "from below" challenge the regime and its capacity to govern. The problem is exacerbated by the State's incapacity to exercise a monopoly on violence and face the differing illegal actors that have gained space in what are considered their regions. These themes will be deeply explored in the case studies included later on in this thesis.

In the next chapter, it will be analysed the impact of the unprecedented alternation of political power in Mexico in 2000, and the great expectations it generated on many sectors about the possibility of a reform of the State, particularly the opportunity to establish a new relationship between the State and the indigenous peoples. The new constitutional reforms will be discussed, as well as the responses of organised indigenous peoples to them.

Chapter Five
The PAN Era: The Interrupted Transition towards a New State and the Uninterrupted Indigenous Rebellion

Vicente Fox's task is titanic
because dismantling an authoritarian apparatus that
has been so entrenched in power for 71 years means
reforming the State practically from head to toe.

Mario Vargas Llosa, 2000[164]

This chapter analyses the repercussions of political change, as marked by the victory of the PAN candidate Vicente Fox in the presidential elections of 2 July 2000, in the Mexican State and its neo-liberal model. It focuses particularly on the possibilities for, but also the limitations upon, the new regime in terms of establishing new mechanisms of inclusion and interaction with society in general, and with indigenous peoples in particular.

When Fox took the presidency, he ended the political hegemony that the PRI had maintained for more than 70 years. This change renewed the hopes of an important part of society for the transformation of Mexico into a democratic State. The collective aspirations of change were confirmed after the subsequent defeat of the PRI in the South-Eastern states that historically served as a pillar of support. Indeed, for the first time in Chiapas in August 2000, Pablo Salazar, a candidate of the opposition, became governor with the support of an alliance of eight opposition parties, including the PAN and the PRD. Later on, in February 2005, Zeferino Torreblanca became Governor of Guerrero with the support of a coalition of the opposition formed by the PRD, Convergence and Revolutionary Party of the South, PRS (Convergencia and el Partido Revolucionario del Sur).

[164] Statement quoted in Martha Lucía Pinzón (2000). Triunfo histórico de Vicente Fox: Un nuevo México, Americasnet.**2008:**http://www.americasnet.net/Commentators/Martha_Pinzon/Pinzon_Historic_Triumph_Spa.pdf

From the early stages of his career as presidential candidate, Fox generated expectations amongst different sectors of the population and made ambitious promises to respect human rights and guarantee the rule of law. Two of the most important initiatives regarding human rights were, firstly, the creation of the Special Attorney's Office for Social and Political Movements of the Past, Femospp (Fiscalía Especial para Movimientos Sociales y Políticos del Pasado) that was in charge of investigating crimes committed during the "dirty war" of the 1960s and 1970s; and, secondly, a personal commitment to ending police brutality and abuses perpetrated by his predecessor in the name of public security. However, both initiatives were incomplete because Fox's administration was not willing to confront the army and other institutions that were involved in such violations (Watch/Americas 2006).

President Fox initiated his government without a majority support in Congress, so he needed to forge political alliances to carry out his governmental proposals. The PAN regime decided to establish pacts with members of the PRI, representatives of the old regime and, as will be explored later on, "*concertacesiones*"[165] (pacts) amongst the political class. These agreements and alliances became some of the main factors that hindered the Mexican transition towards a more democratic State, especially at the national level.

As a consequence of these political pacts, during the six years of the Fox's administration, there were some political and economic reforms however most of these were considered cosmetic because they did not resolve the structural problems that left the Mexican State in an impasse. Most of his proposals could convince neither Mexican society in general, nor the legislators, not even his own party (Doe O'Neal 2003:28-9; Gutiérrez Chong 2004:40).

[165] *Concertacesión* comes from joining the word *concertación* (compromise) and *cesión* (give) and refers to the pacts between the political elites from different political parties.

The most difficult topics pending on the national agenda at the moment of the presidential elections of 2000 were the issue of indigenous rights and the violence in the Southeast of the country, especially in Chiapas. Therefore, as part of the promises of his campaign, during his first year in office Fox committed himself to implementing the accords of San Andrés Larráinzar, and the Cocopa law initiative.[166] However, the Fox government did not reach the necessary consensus around these measures (Dean and Levi 2003:25) and was limited to simply promoting the debate in Congress. As a result, a constitutional reform on indigenous rights and cultures was created,[167] but indigenous organisations, civil groups and social analysts deemed it unilateral, unsatisfactory, deficient and even contrary to the original accords (Burguete C. 2004:239; Hernández, Paz et al. 2004; Sierra 2006:3).

The Indigenous Counter-Reform

Approval of the constitutional reform of indigenous rights and cultures in April 2001 and its subsequent ratification in August of the same year, demonstrated that the policies of the governing elites towards indigenous peoples in Mexico had been more rhetoric than real. In this sense, as political scientist Jane Hindley argues, "any claim that implied the distribution of wealth or power, and that interfered with structures of political representation or with the market was excluded from the law" (Hindley 1996:241).

[166] Showing his lack of knowledge about Chiapas´ reality, as well as the structural complexity of the violence suffered during those years in that state, presidential candidate Vicente Fox promised to resolve the conflict with the EZLN in 15 minutes.
[167] From the 2001 constitutional reforms regarding indigenous rights and culture, different federal laws were reformed and local laws regarding the indigenous affaires were created.

The indigenous reform was approved by Senate representatives of all parties, including the PRD, which has showed a higher degree of commitment with regard to indigenous demands in the past.[168] Subsequently, when the reform went to the lower house of representatives, some deputies of the PRD tried to rectify the damage. However, there had already been an important distancing between the party and the EZLN and some indigenous movements (Hernández C. 2006:121).

The approved indigenous reform had substantial modifications that clearly reduced the scope of the negotiations of previous years between the Zapatista movement and other organisations that supported the government and the legislators. Therefore, it was seen as a step backwards regarding the acknowledgement of indigenous peoples and as a reflection of the lack of political willingness of the government to translate their commitments into actions (Burguete C. 2004:245; Gómez 2004). Bishop Samuel Ruiz and other intellectuals that participated in the peace dialogues described the reform as "contrary to indigenous peoples and a threat to peace" (Asamblea de Migrantes Indígenas and al. 2001).

The reform did not respect the fundamental demands expounded in the Accords of San Andrés (Harvey 2004:119). For example, it did not constitutionally recognise indigenous peoples as subjects bearing rights, but as entities of public interest. Therefore, they did not have the right to their own legal personality or to other instruments and resources to exercise their autonomy. The latter was limited "within the frame of respect for the federal pact and the sovereignty of the State". Thus determining the nature and scope of the

[168] In October 2001, 110 federal deputies, none of them from the PAN, signed the *Manifiesto de San Lázaro*, recognising autonomic rights of indigenous peoples as a current matter in the national political agenda. They also expressed that a new discussion regarding indigenous legislation was necessary and that that chapter was still open (Nahmad 2004:104-5).

autonomy of indigenous peoples and their respective entities was left to the discretion of the Congresses of the different states of the Republic (Sánchez 2004:269-270).

In general terms, the reform restricted the right of indigenous peoples to autonomy in various key fronts. Regarding the economic autonomy, collective enjoyment and access to natural resources within their territories and the right to design their own development plans were not stipulated. Concerning political autonomy, the capacity of indigenous people to make decisions over their own forms of government and elect their own authorities was limited to the jurisdiction of the states (Otero 2004:1048; Harvey 2005:14). Judicial autonomy for the full access to justice through community systems and authorities were not guaranteed. Finally, the reform restricted the degree of indigenous autonomy to their own communities and municipalities, so the right of extra municipal association was cancelled (Sieder 2002:21).

Therefore, indigenous peoples were denied the judicial capacity and the possibility of making decisions over their lives and resources. Likewise, the mainly paternalistic presence of the federal government was fostered and expressed in the establishment of social assistance services and programmes that implied the denial of economic, social and cultural rights of the those peoples (Harvey 2001:1048; LaJornada 2001; Harvey 2005:14; Stahler-Sholk 2005:38). Thus, authors like June Nash think that with the new reform indigenous peoples were even more under the control of the State than before (Nash 2006:183).

Magda Gómez, a well known defender of indigenous rights in the country, considers the reform as illegitimate (and illegal according to international conventions) because of how it was conceived and approved (Gómez 2006). In this sense, the reform was rejected in the

Congress of ten states where most indigenous peoples are concentrated –inter alia, Guerrero, Oaxaca y Chiapas (Harvey 2001:1049; López Bárcenas 2004:218; Harvey 2005; Stahler-Sholk 2005:10).[169] In the rest of the states, the reform was approved thanks to an alliance between the PRI and the PAN.

Indigenous peoples´ representatives submitted more than 320 constitutional controversies before the Supreme Court of Justice regarding serious irregularities in the process of creating the new constitutional reform (Stahler-Sholk 2005:38).[170] To show how they have made international legislation their own, different indigenous and social organisation decided to complain directly to the ILO, arguing that indigenous peoples were not consulted, and therefore articles 15.2 and 61 of the Convention 169 were violated (Asamblea de Migrantes Indígenas and al. 2001; Lachenal 2006:9). The ILO passed the complaint to the Mexican State requesting it act accordingly. This compliant was also taken to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (ICHR). However, it decided that it did not have adequate powers to intervene on this issue and dismissed the complaint.

In sum, the constitutional reform did not offer substantial rights, went against the original agreement and symbolised the lack of political willingness of the governing elite to establish an egalitarian and respectful relationship with indigenous peoples. It also reflects the fear of the elites over losing control to the emerging and increasingly empowered indigenous organisations. Most significant however, is that the opportunity, provided by the Accords of San Andrés, to build a new type of relationship between the Mexican State and

[169] Other states are: Baja California Sur, Estado de México, Hidalgo, Morelos, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa and Zacatecas.
[170] Rosalva Hernández mentions a total of 339 constitutional controversies demanding to render the new reform invalid (Hernández C. 2004:291).

the indigenous peoples was not developed (Hernández Navarro and Carlsen 2004). Furthermore, the mistrust and the conflict between both parties was exacerbated (Hernández C. 2006:121-2).

The Attitude of the Zapatistas and Other Indigenous Movements to the Counter Reform

The failure of a peaceful negotiation with the government or what was considered a reform contrary to the interests of the indigenous peoples led the EZLN to suspend contact with officials from the federal government and call for civil mobilisation to demand compliance with the Cocopa initiative. Due to the State's refusal to modify the constitutional reform and assuming political parties were accomplices, the Zapatistas decided to try to independently implement what had been agreed in the San Andrés Accords. Therefore, they set autonomous jurisdictions as a strategy to establish their own compliance mechanism (Burguete C. 2004:240).[171]

Consequently, since then, the strategy of the Zapatistas and other indigenous organisations has not searched for the acknowledgement of the State, but has focused on the *de facto* exercise of what they consider their indigenous rights. They have also privileged the consolidation of their organisations, structures and authorities at the local level because of the existing legal void. Consequently, the most significant challenges by indigenous peoples to the State were formalised and exacerbated with the creation of autonomous

[171]It is important to mention that since 1987 -before the Zapatista uprising- there were already autonomy experiences in Chiapas (Stavenhagen 1999:18; Burguete C 2004:244; Hernádez C 2006:126); however, they did not pose a risk to the Mexican State as did the Zapatistas and the subsequent cascades of autonomies that were replicated in other states.

communities and municipalities in Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas (Otero 2003:261).[172] Therefore, some indigenous communities with a history of strong organisational processes, built *de facto* autonomies and went beyond the legal limit recognised by the State (Sierra 2006:13). This implied challenging the judicial order of the state apparatus and questioning the legitimacy and legality of its institutions (Burguete C. 2004).

The best known case is the Zapatista autonomies in Chiapas that, since 1994, have passed through different phases until they built *los caracoles* (the snails) in 2003. From these self-governing organisational forms, the Zapatistas have created alternative administrations with their respective good governance councils that are responsible for coordinating public policies regarding education and health at the local level, as well as justice and communication of rebel municipalities.[173] There are also other organisations that have created their own systems of security and justice, rescuing and reinventing some indigenous normative systems such as the Community Police in Costa Chica-Montaña, or the establishment of a self-governing municipality through the reproduction of Traditional Authorities in Sulajáa (Xochistlahuaca) both in the state of Guerrero. These cases will be explored as part of the case studies in the next chapters.

The deluge of autonomies generated from the Zapatista uprising has received different responses from the Mexican State, from active opposition -as in the case of Chiapas- to official recognition -as in the case of Oaxaca- and ambivalence -such as some cases in

[172] For example, in Guerrero in 1995 the Consejo de Pueblos Nahuas del Alto Balsas (CPNAB) decided to create the Autonomous Municipality of Alto Balsas, after a protest against the building of a dam in their territory (Díaz de Jesús and de Jesús 1999: 164-5). For an interesting analysis of autonomy experiences in Mexico before the Zapatistas and in other regions of the country, read the book coordinated by Aracelí Burguete (1999) México: Experiencias de autonomía indígena. Guatemala, Grupo Internacional de Trabajo sobre Asuntos Indígenas (IWGIA).

[173] For an excellent analysis of *los caracoles*, please read Aracelí Burguete Cal y Mayor (2003), "Las juntas de buen gobierno: Otras autonomías de facto son posibles", Revista Mexicana, México, Noviembre.

Guerrero (Cleary 2005:2).[174] However, some organised indigenous peoples have decided to establish *de facto* autonomy, challenging the power of the State and pushing its limits, something which they have paid a high price for with the militarisation of their territories and the presence of paramilitary groups that have engaged in many acts of confrontation and intimidation (Watch/Americas 2001:112). Furthermore, actions seeking autonomy have, in some cases, caused confrontation between Zapatistas and their supporters with those organisations that decided that they did not want to support their strategies as will be analysed in the next section.

Divisions amongst National Indigenous Movements

> *But surprise! All of a sudden, one of the new players, the most verbally aggressive, was asking not only to change the rules of the game, but the game in general. Without stopping screaming they started moving away from their friends and discreetly joined the professional players and without any explanation they start playing with them under the same rules they used to criticise. They are not interested in their old friends' struggle to change the rules and the strategies of the game before the start of the game. The former, tired of being neglected and expelled from the game made their own game. The audience is divided. The scene transforms itself. No there is not one game with one group of players but many of them each one of them with their own bet.*
>
> Francisco López Bárcenas, 2006[175]

The indigenous movements in Mexico show great diversity in the levels of organisation and consolidation, scope and cohesion. Moreover, the diverging character of their proposals and the way they exercise their autonomy, their relationship with the government and their links with political parties are increasingly evident.

[174] The state of Oaxaca is the only state that recognises autonomous municipalities (Cleary 2005:6).
[175] Francisco López Bárcenas (2006). 2006: Los juegos y las apuestas. La Jornada.México.

The crisis and confrontations of indigenous movements in general has been exacerbated in the last ten years. There are several explanations for this, amongst which there are: the increased levels of repression by the State, the lack of compliance of the federal government with indigenous demands, the division within indigenous organisations and the co-opting of their leaders (Bühler 2000:122).

In the case of the Zapatista movement, war and harassment with impunity by the State forces as well as other irregular forces, governmental deception, internal division and exhaustion have led to the radicalisation of their struggle. This has increasingly polarised them in relation to other indigenous movements, especially regarding the dichotomy of "with us or against us". The conflict has worsened to the extent that there is no room for neutrality, so the Zapatistas demand absolute loyalty (Hernández C. 2006:117).

As has been repeatedly suggested throughout this research, the strategies of struggle adopted by indigenous movements and organisations are highly heterogenic due to the particular conditions in which groups were created. Throughout the country, it is possible to find groups that have rejected any contact with governmental representatives (following the Zapatista position) and those that have decided, in order to benefit their own process, to take advantage of the programmes of co-investment and some other resources that the government and other international institutions offer. Likewise, some organisations have opted to establish a closer relationship with political parties and/or avail themselves to mediation in order to enjoy greater participation in electoral process and promote changes in the government and compliance with their indigenous rights. However, in an atmosphere of polarisation and repression, these strategic divergences amongst indigenous groups have, in some cases, been skilfully manipulated by political parties and local elites in order to

facilitate their mutation into greater tension and more violent struggles. The State has also fostered and financed division within indigenous movements (Hernández C. 2006:123). For example, in communities or municipalities where there are autonomous movements with alternative institutions, some State or municipal governments have created parallel movements or institutions in order to cause division and confrontation amongst autonomous organisations and the civil population which, in many cases, has to choose between one group or another. All this has caused a higher level of radicalisation and intolerance amongst different indigenous groups, as this research explores in the subsequent case studies.

Additionally, it is important to recognise that in Mexico there remains an authoritarian culture, not only in regards to the State and governmental institutions, but amongst movements, organisations and citizens in general. This can be seen, for example, in important indigenous groups that lack a democratic culture in their internal process and present themselves as the one true voice (Rubin 1994; Hernández C. 2006:128), denigrating what they consider to be their opponents, a process which contributes to the polarisation.

One illustrative case of the crisis and division of indigenous movements is the ANIPA, an important organisation of national scope. The ANIPA has suffered significant internal division and severe recriminations from other indigenous groups due to the type of strategies that it has developed to promote indigenous rights (Rojas 2005). In 1999, it decided to become a National Political Association (NPA) in order to achieve a higher level of political participation and acquire more public resources for its proposals.[176] Likewise,

[176] According to the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures, the National Political Associations are "forms of citizens associations that help with the development of democratic life and political culture and

some of its members decided to accept the invitation of the Fox administration to work on indigenous affairs while others joined the PRD to "maintain the struggle through electoral participation to access public posts by popular vote"(ANIPA 1999; Sánchez Nestor 2006).[177] Therefore, as one of its leaders points out, "in contrast with other indigenous organisations that have expressed their opposition to parties and elections, the ANIPA decided to forge political alliance and take indigenous deputies to Congress"(Ruiz H. 1999:48). Along these lines, in 2006, the ANIPA decided to ally with the PRD and its candidates for the federal elections and did not take part in the *Otra Campaña* Zapatista that promoted abstentionism and the organisation of an independent national movement to build a new programme of struggle in order to create a new Mexican political constitution (CCRI-CGEZLN 2005).[178]

The establishment of such alliances has led the ANIPA to incur serious criticism and recrimination from different indigenous organisations such as the National Indigenous Congress, CNI (Congreso Nacional Indígena) and similar groups as well as academics close to the Zapatistas. This is reflected by the epigraph at the beginning of this section which corresponds to a text by Francisco López Bárcenas.

The case of the ANIPA shows two important problems within indigenous movements and organisations. Firstly, key leaders or representatives, also considered part of the indigenous

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with the creation of a better informed public opinion" (Cofipe 2008). This figure was approved as part of the political-electoral refoms in 1998 and as a formula in response to the demands for political participation of citizens. They have significant resources for their activities (UNP 2006).

[177] The nahua anthropologist, Marcos Matías, became the first indigenous director of the INI in September 2000 (Gutiérrez Chong 2004:38). Matías founded the ANIPA and was an active member of the ANIPA as well as the CNI before becoming a deputy of the PRD.

[178] The *Otra Campaña* is a political initiative of the Zapatistas that is part of the "Sixth Statement of the Selva Lacandona", published in June 2005, where they proposed the initiative of a nationwide tour in order to listen to the organised and disorganised people "from the left and below" who want to change society.

"intelligencia", have been incorporated into the national political arena – especially the PRD-,[179] losing their contact with their support base (Dietz 2004:65). The second problem, highlighted by Deborah Yashar, is the double-edged situation that the indigenous movements face when they decide to participate together with political parties in electoral processes because internal divisions in those movements can grow to the point of fragmenting them while they fall into the trap of electoral calculations and political concessions (Yashar 2005:306). Likewise, Charles Hale argues that the absence of a clear strategy to participate in the government or in political parties causes indigenous movements to run the risk of being co-opted and even more fragmented (Hale 2004:45).

Different proposals regarding the exercise of autonomy

As previously mentioned, there are important coincidences amongst the different indigenous movements regarding the concept of autonomy, understood as the collective right of peoples to their self-determination (or self government) within a plural State. This means that their judicial capacity should be recognised in order to make decisions regarding their wellbeing, the resolution of conflicts and the management of resources in their territory according to their internal practices (Stavenhagen 1992:437).[180] However, the different indigenous actors have not reached a consensus on the scope and limits of the exercise of autonomy (van Cott 2000a:275; de la Peña 2006:289).

There have been different proposals in various states or regions of the country influenced by previous experiences, generational changes, degrees of multiethnic interaction, and

[179] One of the main leaders justified his participation in the PRD arguing that he sought to modify the statutes of the party so as to establish a number of indigenous deputies (Ruiz 1999:48).
[180] Van Cott 2000a:211 and Yashar 2005:298 concur on this issue,

relationships with political parties and governmental institutions amongst others. So far, at least three trends have been clearly identified regarding the exercise of autonomy: the communitarian, the *"municipalitista*" and the regionalist (Assies 1999:38; de la Peña 2006:289). The first one argues that communities are the vital space of action of indigenous peoples and that autonomy has been historically exercised in many of them. This position was promoted by a trend of the indigenous movement of Oaxaca and in the end adopted by the CNI (Ruiz H. 1999:40; Esteva 2001:143). The second one considers that the exercise of autonomy should take advantage of, and adjust to, the existing constitutional frame of the municipality that confers important powers for the decentralised management of actions and resources. The third proposal –inspired by the Nicaraguan model-promotes the creation of autonomous pluri-ethnic regions that work as a fourth level in a decentralised government between the municipality and the federal governmental apparatus.[181] This last proposal has been supported by movements that had a presence in organisations from Chiapas such as the FIPI and the ANIPA even before the Zapatista uprising.

Finally, autonomy at the community level was adopted in the accords of San Andrés Larráinza, albeit causing conflict amongst different indigenous movements. It was agreed among different indigenous organisations to support, at least preliminarily, that proposal as the first step towards a wider indigenous autonomy process in the frame of the negotiations with the State. In 2001, with the indigenous constitutional reform, diverse proposals regarding the scope of their autonomy once again flourished amongst organisations.

[181] Aracelí Burguete, Héctor Díaz Polanco and Consuelo Sánchez are amongst the main promoters of this proposal and backed the Support Group for Regional Pluri-ethnic Autonomy (Grupo de Apoyo a la Autonomía Regional Pluriétnica), GAARI, as part of the proposals for constitutional reform on indigenous rights (Ruiz 1999:22).

Nevertheless, not many of the "*de facto* autonomies" around the country that had been created since the uprising of the EZLN were able to maintain themselves. Only the Zapatistas had survived over time thanks to the truce with the government which guaranteed a judicial space for them to continue (Burguete C. 2004). Amongst the reasons that account for the failure of some autonomous projects in other regions, are: "the lack of participation of the majority of communities involved; leaders of the organisations did not or could not resist government incentives to abandon them; and the overpowering impact of governmental repression that appeared when leaders failed to accept official offers".[182]

One of the main risks that autonomies face is their own informal character which makes them very vulnerable before discretional actions by the State. In addition, as Araceli Burguete posits, the fact that the autonomies are *de facto* and not *de jure* is a very costly problem because it implies many sacrifices: autonomies wear out over time, consensus agreements are broken leading to the deepening of internal confrontations (Burguete C. 2004:40). Similarly, Jenny Pearce suggests that autonomy has, on the one hand, been a strategy of indigenous peoples to face the impositions of the caciques and of institutions of the federal government and forced the construction of a new form of governability; yet, on the other hand, it has also been used to justify more conservative practises and hierarchical forms of organisation within communities (Pearce 2001:23).

[182] Francisco López Bárcenas as cited in Luis Hernández (2008) Francisco López Bárcenas. Pensamiento Crítico. Madrid, Federación de Asociaciones de Dinamización Socicultural. FADS. 2008: http://www.pensamientocritico.org/luiher1205.htm

The Danger of Manipulated Autonomies

There exists a real risk of abuse in the formation of new autonomies or decentralisation particularly from caciques -indigenous or mestizo- because those processes are usually used in a rhetorical capacity as a "communitarianism" or "indianism" to block efforts intended to modernise traditional models of domination (Hernández Navarro 1994:7).

In many cases, political leaders or caciques demand respect for traditions in order to protect their own political or commercial projects from competition and opposition. This is because they control transportation, alcohol, flowers, candles and fireworks for traditional celebrations in what they consider their region (Hernández and Carlsen 1994:8). Therefore, many analysts concur that, throughout history, the defense of indigenous traditions and autonomies has been, at least in some cases, a strategy of caciques to maintain their power (Gledhill 1998:17; Bartra 2007; Stahler-Sholk 2007:37). One of the authors that criticises indigenous normative systems is Roger Bartra, and he points out that those forms of government have been deeply infiltrated and skilfully manipulated by the interests of mestizos and the political bureaucracy of the post-revolutionary government. The main purpose, according to Bartra, has been to maintain the hegemony of the national State over indigenous communities (Bartra 2007:165).

Along the same lines, Jan Rus reconstructed the history of institutional revolutionary communities in Los Altos de Chiapas and demonstrated how the PRI contributed to

creating and legitimising indigenous cacicazgos in this state using and manipulating their customs and traditions for their own benefit.[183]

Similarly, in Oaxaca, some electoral processes that have been developed according to the system of customs and traditions, have been used to cover the caciquismo behind them (Gledhill 1998; Velásquez 1999:293). Cristina Velásquez has developed an interesting analysis on how, for many decades, the election of candidates in indigenous municipalities was carried out without any problems through a customary system of assemblies but only if they were registered under the PRI. Over time, and as a consequence of the growing presence and competence of opposition political parties, such practises were increasingly contested (Velásquez 1999). This could be one of the explanations for the origins of the indigenous state reforms fostered by the PRI since 1990[184] and consolidated in the Code of Political Institutions and Electoral Process of Oaxaca (Código de Instituciones Políticas y Procesos Electorales de Oaxaca), CIPPEO, in 1995. The latter allowed indigenous communities to elect municipal authorities through their customary systems and not necessarily through political parties. In this sense, and due to the political context of the period, the reform could have been approved to avoid indigenous communities allying themselves with the PRD and the PAN which were ascending in voter support in Oaxaca (López Hernández 1997).[185]

[183] Jan Rus (1994) "The ´Comunidad Revolucionaria Institucional´ The subversion of native government in highland Chiapas 1936-1968" en Joseph Gilbert y Daniel Nugent (1994) Everyday form of State formation: Revolution and the negotiation of the rule in Modern Mexico. Durham, N.C.; London, Duke University Press, pp 265-300 citado en Burguete 2004.

[184] In 1990 the constitution of Oaxaca was reformed to incorporate the unprecedented acknowledgement of the pluriethnic composition of its population. In 1995, the CIPPEO was modified to formalise the system of traditions and customs for the elections. Finally, in 1998 the Law for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Communties was created.

[185] It has also been mentioned that the state reform was promoted by the PRI in order to seek legitimacy and avoid the spread of the Zapatista rebellion around Oaxaca (Esteva 2001:135).

In a detailed study, Matthew Cleary demonstrates that out of 418 municipalities in Oaxaca that opted for the customary system to elect their authorities, 180 are predominantly mestizos (Cleary 2005:13). In his opinion, with the reform of the electoral code in 1995, "the local elites took advantage of the opportunity to decrease the degree of State intervention in local matters as a means of maintaining their power at the local level" (Cleary 2005:15).

A recent paradigmatic example of the serious problem caused by local caciquismo in Oaxaca took place on the 4th of November 2007, when an indigenous woman, Eufrosina Cruz Mendoza, participated as a presidential candidate for the municipality of Santa María Quiegolani according to the customary system. As she appeared to be achieving greater electoral support than her competitor, a male teacher called Eloy Mendoza, she was informed she could no longer participate because "she was a woman". She presented her case to state authorities, and finally, in December 2007, the local congress declared her candidacy as valid and she was elected (Vélez 2008). However, Eufrosina was excluded from half of the community assemblies where indigenous chontales elected the members of the town hall in which she would preside. Elpidio López Miguel, as president of the assembly, argued that according to an order of the former major, Saúl Cruz Vásquez, she did not have the right to participate because she was "a woman and a professional" (García and Escobar 2008).

This case particularly illustrates what happens with young migrants, such as Eufrosina Cruz who was 29 years old, when they return to their municipalities and question the practices and forms of exerting power. They have to face conservative sectors that prefer to maintain a more traditional and hierarchical community model.

In sum, this is a real problem that will persist whilst some organised indigenous peoples continue to challenge the State using informal practises to exercise what they consider their rights; and the governing elite continues to exhibit a lack of interest to open a political agenda that drives genuine agreements into legislation that clearly establishes collective rights and duties of indigenous people.

The Continuity of the Fox Regime and Neo-liberal Multiculturalism

The Violent Omission: The Policy of "Why Me?"[186]

The Fox government was characterised by a policy of ignoring significant violations of human rights across different states in the country where impunity ruled. This contributed to the perception that the power of the PRI had not disappeared and the cronyist networks, nepotism and impunity remained intact even when another party had assumed power.

The report from Amnesty International on the human rights situation in Mexico is unequivocal:

> *President Vicente Fox finished his administration without complying with the commitment of his government to finish with all violations of human rights and end impunity, which were still widespread. The Federal Congress did not approve reforms to the constitution and the system of public security and penal justice that allowed them to improve the protection of human rights. Reports of torture, arbitrary detention, excessive use of force and judicial procedures devoid of guarantees continued especially at the state level. There were reports of serious violations of human rights in the state of Oaxaca in the context of a dilated political crisis* (Amnesty International 2007).

[186] Response from President Fox when he was asked if he would intervene against the directors of television Azteca, one of the privileged groups that ordered the violent seizure of the channel 40 in January 2003.

The policies of Foxism bequeathed a legacy similar to that of its PRI predecessors, a strong military apparatus and weak governmental institutions and Fox could not turn around this trend through a new social pact, but stressed the authoritarian characteristics of the regime (Esteva 2001:139). Yet in parallel, indigenous organisations and movements became stronger and increasingly challenged the State and its ability to govern. This explains the frontal attack of the governing elites against them, especially at the local level, due to the fear that the success of the movement would expand to other regions and jeopardise the economic model and possible transnational investment.

For instance, the well known Mexican journalist Blanche Petrich has documented that as a result of the first seven years of the PAN regime (2000-2006), 900 political prisoners were registered, half of them in the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero. These were people related to the struggle for the defence of the land or ecologists, defenders of human and community rights and members of the *Otra Campaña Zapatista*. They were all detained in police-military operation intended to extinguish recent popular movements and protests (Petrich 2007).[187]

[187] Miguel Ángel Granados Chapa, another well known journalist in Mexico said recently that during the PAN government of Vicente Fox 2000-2006, 68 people disappeared and in the new government of Felipe Calderón (2007-2012), so far there have been 30 disappearances. This has caused the national front against repression to re-emerge under the leadership of social activist Rosario Ibarra, which was active in 1979 to free political prisoners and clarify the circumstances of disappearances during the "dirty war" of the 1970s (Granados Chapa 2007).

The Relationship between the Mexican State and the Indigenous People in the Foxist Era of Neo-liberalism

The regime of Vicente Fox maintained the process of neo-liberal modernisation that Miguel de la Madrid cautiously initiated in 1982 and Carlos Salinas deepened dramatically since 1988.

As his predecessors, the Fox regime adopted a neo-liberal ideology that posited the common good is attainable by integrating local and national economies into the processes of the global market (Stolle-McAllister 2005:25). According to this logic, the best way to make productive structures efficient and modernist for the country would be to improve the infrastructure, which in turn would attract a higher degree of foreign investment. From this perspective, they wanted to push forward mega-projects that supported integration into the global market within projects such as Plan Puebla-Panamá (PPP), giving a fundamental role to private and foreign capital as central elements of modernisation and national development.

This way, the government planned, amongst other projects, to build hydroelectric dams to provide water to the centre of tourist development and new agro-exporting plantations (CIEPAC 2007). One of the most interesting cases is La Parota dam project, in Guerrero, which, since 2003 has generated active resistance from ejido owners whose lands would be affected by it. Work is still suspended but an organisational movement has grown around it, which already transcends the original initiative.

Although there were some infrastructure works in certain strategic regions intended to link economic enclaves and develop "productive centres", the PPP did not manage to consolidate itself and occupied a secondary place in the official discourse and public policies of the Fox government (Harvey 2004:122).

During the six years of the Fox administration the neo-liberal economic strategy of abandoning the countryside was maintained. According to researcher Julio Boltvinik, who specialises in poverty related issues, more than 1,630,000 people in rural areas became destitute in the penultimate year of his administration (Zuñiga 2006). The increase in poverty and heightened inequality in the distribution of the national wealth generated important social mobilisations.[188] One of the most significant of these was that of rural producers who organised under the banner of "the countryside can take no more". Between 2002 and 2003 the movement carried out a series of different activities against the negative effects of commercial agreements between Mexico and other countries. As part of this, in January 2003, they carried out a huge protest in Mexico City where there were more that 100,000 peasants and indigenous peoples from across the country participating. The main demands of the mobilised were to establish a moratorium regarding the agricultural chapter of the NAFTA and the recognition of their indigenous cultures and rights (Bartra 2004:25). For many analysts, this protest demonstrated the 'indianisation' of the rural movement in general and of peasants in particular (Fernández C 2004; Otero 2004).

In political-cultural terms, the Fox regime adopted the rhetorical commitment to neo-liberal multiculturalism started by Carlos Salinas de Gortari in 1992. For this reason, it is thought

[188] Mexico still endures highly uneven levels of wealth distribution. 10% of the poorest receive 1.6% of the total income whereas 10% of the richest receive 39.4% (PNUD 2008:283).

that with the alternation of power amongst political parties "nothing had changed deep within, rather the integrationist indigenism was still alive along with the neo-indigenist policies" (Burguete C. 2004:146-163).

In the neo-liberal era, the attempts of the State to integrate indigenous peoples into the predominant model of development have consisted of turning them into "free individuals" in order to sell their lands and their workforce to the global market (Hernández, Paz *et al*. 2004:8).

Following the global trend of neo-liberal multiculturalism, neo-indigenist policies of Foxism opened spaces from above to validate some of the rights of indigenous peoples and promoted their participation in some public matters. This was encouraged only if they did not contradict established social and economic structures, which were managed within the hegemonic judicial model (Sieder 2006:17; Sierra 2006:21). On the contrary, the demands for autonomy in the control of natural resources and the creation of alternative systems of production –all of which implied deep changes in the economic model and were also the basis of collective organisation- were systematically blocked or repressed.

For this reasons, Charles Hale insists that the political threat represented by the neo-liberal multiculturalism of the elite in Latin America only recognises partial and intentionally unfinished rights that reaffirm differences but deepen inequalities (Hale 2002:491-3). Similarly, the principle of judicial equality is applied without the required rectification of past injustices, causing inequalities which perpetuate the political and economic marginalisation of the indigenous population (Hale 2002:523; Hale 2006:323).

Hale considers that multicultural neo-liberalism pretends to reconstruct the indigenous being in its own image so that it is congruent with the dominant model. Therefore, it creates "the authorised Indian" (*Indio permitido)* i.e. the one that passes the test of modernity and replaces "protest" with "proposal" apart from being authentic, moderated and negotiating with the representatives of the dominant paradigm. In the meantime, the other Indian who wants a political and economic transformation is considered radical by neo-liberalists and marginalised towards spaces of poverty and exclusion (Hale 2004:17-9; Hale 2006:20-44). In sum, it praises individuals or organisations that promote acceptable "cultural rights" and punishes the others, labelling them radical for their insistence on an egalitarian distribution of resources and for confronting the imposed representative forms (Hale 2002:496-8).

Although it has become a strategy of the elites to try to co-opt and tame indigenous movements (Canessa 2006:257), neo-liberal multiculturalism has also been reinterpreted and reinvented by organised indigenous peoples, becoming a strategy that gives them a collective identity to claim their rights (van Cott 2003:228). For some authors, multiculturalism has served to engender positive recognition of the existence of those peoples and helped strengthen their cultures (de la Peña 2006). Therefore, the latter has made the discourses and concepts such as citizenship their own in order to articulate their struggle, make their demands to the government and win their own spaces (Canessa 2006:257).

Conclusions

Even though Fox's ascent to power marked a historical shift in Mexican politics, the monolithic and minority vision of the State prevailed in the regime. Indeed, there was not

any genuine political will amongst the governing elite to accept a pluricultural judicial framework that recognised the existing diversity and aided to consolidate democratic governance.

Fox's PAN regime lacked the capacity and the willingness to make the structural changes necessary for the complete reformulation of the Mexican State so that a new social pact with society in general and indigenous peoples in particular could be established. Likewise, the Fox government did not dare to face the "untouchable" *de facto* powers such as the army and monopolies and oligopolies in the country. Neither did it break with the authoritarian legacy of the PRI but based itself on the same approach to drive the neo-liberal model of development at any cost.

The principle conflict during the period of political shift was a confrontation between two different visions of the construction of the Mexican State. On the one hand, for Fox and the business elites, the best way to ensure continuity in the reformulation of the State, was to tighten the links with the global economy. On the other hand, indigenous peoples, in alliance with other social and political sectors, believed that it was possible to take the first step from below towards a new more plural and inclusive State. This would imply a deep reformulation of the State apparatus and especially the strengthening of autonomous processes of self representation and self government as the fundamental principles for a plural and multiethnic nation. However, as pointed out by some Mexican analysts, the provision of such autonomy would be contrary to the interests of the governing elite as it would empower actors who do not share their State project (Hernández, Paz et al. 2004:13).

The big problem is that as time goes by the positions become radicalised and polarised, the lack of trust and frustrations grow, and the possibility of indigenous peoples ensuring their individual and collective rights peacefully is further away.

Three Possible Scenarios for the Relationship between the Mexican State and Indigenous Peoples

As a conclusion of this chapter and based on the arguments presented so far, it is possible to argue there are three possible scenarios for the relationship between the Mexican State and indigenous peoples:

1. A higher degree of repression by the State against indigenous autonomous movements which would radicalise their responses and would cause a deep confrontation with the governing elite. Likewise, there would be an ethnic-social conflict based on the struggle to implement two different models of development.

2. The adoption of neo-liberal multiculturalism and its conception of the "*Indio permitido*" (authorised Indian) by indigenous groups (something that Charles Hale has warned about). This would not be translated into a substantial shift of the conditions of subordination and marginalisation in which they have lived so far, but it would be an implicit acceptance of the existing model of both development and the State.

3. The *de facto* consolidation of autonomous processes as the main resource used by independent indigenous peoples to challenge the neo-liberal State model at the local level. This would be used as a reference point for those movements that could actively affect the

reconfiguration of the State apparatus in alliance with other socio-political groups in key political circumstances or *conjunctures*. The purpose of indigenous organisations would be to gradually achieve the full exercise of their individual and collective rights.

These three scenarios will be explored in greater depth in the case studies presented in the following chapter. Before that, the next chapter present a brief introduction to the state of Guerrero which exemplifies the still incomplete State formation process of Mexico and the difficulties that the governing elites is having to integrated some regions to the neoliberal model. It is precisely in Guerrero where it is possible to appreciate a combination of issues that make difficult for the elite the consolidation of the neoliberal State project such as the existence of authoritarian enclaves led by reactionary local bosses who violently oppose the loss of traditional power and privileges; the crisis of the previous post-revolutionary control mechanisms; the multiple indigenous mobilisations and organisational responses to the implementation of neoliberal development projects in their territories; the increase in organised crime, among many others obstacles that -in many cases- have exacerbated the use of State violence in order to carry out the State project at any cost.

Chapter Six:
Brief Introduction to the State of Guerrero

In the history of Guerrero, what should be unusual is not the recurrent rebellious violence but the Samaritan patience with which the population persistently organises themselves to properly channel their claims. However, the response of the government and caciques to these peaceful movements is always iron and fire and, as a response to the obstacles, those who have been chronically rejected raise their voices, stones, machetes….

Armando Bartra[189]

This brief introduction to the state of Guerrero is an attempt to contextualise the two case studies presented in this research. There is an emphasis on the incomplete state formation process reflected on the abandonment or uneven present of the federal authorities in many regions of its territory, the unequal incorporation and economic growth of the different sub-regions of the state, as well as the predominance of authoritarian interactions and relationships ruled by intermediaries or caciques, who are closely aligned with the PRI. Similarly, this chapter explores the history of the struggle and social organisation of different socio-political actors against abuses of power, which has passed through different phases, including a phase of armed violence.

Geographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics

The state of Guerrero is divided into seven socio-economic regions: Acapulco, Centro, Norte, Tierra Caliente, Costa Grande, Costa Chica and La Montaña.

[189] Armando Bartra (2000). Crónicas del Sur: Utopías campesinas en Guerrero. Era, México, p.17.

Map indicating the regions of the state of Guerrero, México (Nistal y Priego 2007:13).

The topography of Guerrero is rough and treacherous with many mountains and steep slopes that impeded the construction of roads and ensured the isolation of some regions for many years (Jacobs 1982:31; García 2000a:277). This explains the uneven development experienced over the course of its history. The difference is evident in the contrast between, on the one hand, the strong economic growth in Chilpancingo –the capital-, in mining cities of the North and in the tourist ports of Acapulco and Ixtapa, and, on the other, the harsh abandonment of the rest of the state, particularly rural areas where marginalisation and extreme poverty are evident.

According to official estimates from 2005 included in the minutes of the "*Encuentro Estatal Campesino" (*Peasant State Meeting), 73 out of 81 municipalities are highly marginalised, which is the equivalent of 90% of the territory. Currently 44.6% of the homes in Guerrero have low incomes that do not cover basic food costs; 51% do not have access

to health services and education whilst 66.6% do not generate sufficient income to afford clothes, shoes, housing and public transport expenses (Encuentro Estatal Campesino 2008:1).

Guerrero is still evidently agrarian.[190] More that 40% of the population live in rural areas and work on subsistence agriculture. There are few employment options. Tourism provides 70% of the state income but benefits few.[191] For this reason, peasants and indigenous peoples who are isolated from tourist enclaves have few alternatives to getting an income: primarily migration and drug trafficking.[192]

The municipalities of the sub-region known as Costa Chica-Montaña, in the South East of the state share common conditions of extreme poverty, high levels of indigenous populations and strong migration. The region covers seventeen municipalities, eleven of which are considered as highly marginalised and form part of the 50 poorest regions in Mexico (INEGI 2004). They basically cultivate maize for their own consumption and other options for rural produces are limited (Doe O'Neal 2003). In many municipalities, the lack of communications and transportation has been the biggest obstacle to the commercialisation of more diversified agricultural produce.

Most indigenous peoples of the state live in this sub-region and they represent 17% of the national total. Some of the main groups are the Amuzgos (9%), Nahuas (40%), Mixtecos

[190] If according to official parameters, a rural population is defined as one that lives in towns with a maximum of 2,500 people, then 42% (1,322,247 inhabitants) of the population of Guerrero is rural (Encuentro Estatal Campesino 2008:1).
[191] Interview with Abel Barrada, president of the Tlachinollan Centre for Human Rights; Chilpancingo, 17th of August 2004.
[192] Interview with Silvestre Pacheco, writer and political analyst of Guerrero; Zihuatanejo, 24th August 2004.

(28%) and Tlapanecos (22%) (INI 2002; Conapo 2006).[193] In the low lands of the sub-region, there is a higher level of interaction and mingling between different ethnic groups whereas ethnic majorities predominate in the highlands and more isolated areas such as some communities of La Montaña and Xochistlahuaca.[194]

The zone of Costa Chica-Montaña has experienced large scale migrations of indigenous peasants to the North of the country because most of their crops are seasonal and in the dry seasons there are no jobs.[195] Accordingly, they go to Sinaloa and Sonora to work on tomato crops and other export products. Since 2000, the migratory flow toward the US has notably increased, something which is reflected in the remittances of the diaspora community that constitute 5% of the GDP in Guerrero (World Bank 2003:14).

Migration has had a double-edged effect: on the one hand, it causes the relative depeasantisation of the rural family, affecting its integrity and continuity (including the feminisation of agriculture). However, on the other hand, it has become the new means of support for many families. Peasants migrate during different seasons to work in the North, but when they come back they return to their agricultural activities. Therefore, as an author suggests, "they earn money there to produce here" (Bustamante 2001:169).

In some areas of La Montaña, the dry season has become a key period for growing poppy and marijuana, both of which are crucial sources of income for some marginalised rural communities. According to a report published in 2004 by the newspaper *El Sur de*

[193] In a report, the World Bank says that 85% of indigenous peoples in Guerrero live in the region of La Montaña (World Bank 2003:6).
[194] In the municipality of Xochistlahuaca, for example, more than 90% of the population is Amuzgo.
[195] The dry season runs from October to April and the rainy season from May to September.

Acapulco and based on information by the General Attorney's Office, Guerrero is the first producer of heroine in Mexico (63% of national production) and the third producer of marijuana (Ortega 2004:1, 8-9). "The fact that the peasants are growing drugs instead of traditional crops such as maize and coffee responds to a financial logic because the price of the opium base reaches 750 pesos in La Montaña and 1,200 pesos in the regional market of Tlapa, while maize is sold for 40 cents per kilo in the market".[196]

History of the Political and Social Struggle

The history of Guerrero has been characterised by an authoritarian and repressive form of government in which both the presence of caciques and the exercise of power using weapons and other forms of violence have predominated.[197] In this state, the worse parts of the presidentialist centralism and the conservative regionalism are combined, so a political system that is as authoritarian as it is conflictive has emerged (Bartra 2001:45). Since its creation as an independent entity, political leaders have struggled for political autonomy and control over the management of natural resources. They have based their power on a series of clientelistic relationships and have constantly challenging the central power using an opportunistic federalism (Jacobs 1982:6). For example, previously revolutionary caudillos – such as the Figueroas- proclaimed "*Guerrero para los guerrerense*" which implies a reactionary regionalism (Bartra 2000c:23). With time, they became local caciques learning to play under the rules of the political process, thus surviving under the PRI (Jacobs 1982:137).

[196] Lloyd 2003, quoted in Margaret Doe O´Neal 2003:36.
[197] Interview with Abel Barreda, President of the Tlachinollan Centre of Human Rights (Nistal y Priego 2007:12).

Authors such as Armado Bartra have emphasised that what has predominated in the state is a wide deployment of discretionary powers that collide with each other and are exerted through violence. Therefore, in "the political system of Guerrero, forces, unwritten rules and other kinds of informalities over rule law" (Bartra 2000c:15). This situation of violence and conservative caciquismo has been counteracted by progressive leaders and civic movements as well as civil and social organisations that face repression "at the most minimal expression of citizen's rebellion". For many years, this situation made any chance of opposition organisation in the state impossible (Bartra 2000c:25-6).

Towards the end of the 1950 and the beginning of the 1960s, important social protests and initiatives emerged due to the increase in poverty, political violence and impunity, particularly in rural areas. For example, in 1959 the Civic Association of Guerrero (Asociación Cívica Guerrerense) led by teacher Genáro Vázquez was created. The group "los cívicos" (the civics) emerged from this movement and supported the regional organisation of producers with a more political than socio-economic approach, which challenged the power of the PRI caciques in the *ejidos* and municipalities (García 2000a:284). Teacher Lucio Cabañas created the Party of the Poor (Partido de los Pobres) in Atoyac de Álvarez, mainly formed by peasants and students. Both organisations were violently repressed by agents of the State, which led to the radicalisation of their movement and the subsequent creation of armed groups. In 1964, Vázquez formed the National Revolutionary Civic Association, ACNR, (Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria) whilst in 1967, Cabañas founded the Peasants Brigade for the Distribution of Justice (Brigada Campesina de Ajusticiamiento).

The government of President Luis Echeverría (1970-1976), inherited a legacy of a severe crisis in political legitimacy that marked the massacre of students in 1968, and correspondingly initiated different policies for the pacification of areas that endured high levels of conflict and were considered "red zones", as in the case of Guerrero. To this end, he used a two pronged policy. On the one hand, the state increased investment in rural economic activities, taking an indirect role in funding, producing, and commercialising agricultural produce. Although it was initially conceived as a counter insurgency measure, this policy contributed to the development of public works and infrastructure in the area.[198] On the other hand, state companies were established, and they employed local people, so the State occupied a central role in the process of economic development (Cienfuegos y Carlsen 2003:45).

In turn, the military presence dramatically increased in rural areas to control the guerrillas and their supporters. This led to one of the darkest periods in the history of violence in Mexico known as the dirty war. This lasted until the 1980s and was characterised by the bloody repression of dissident social organisations and the closure of civil spaces. Tita Radilla, vice president of the Association of the Relatives of the Detainees, the Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Violations in Mexico, AFADEM, (Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos, Desaparecidos y Víctimas de Violaciones de Derechos Humanos en México), has stated that more that four hundred people unrelated to armed groups disappeared during that period (Nistal y Priego 2007:13; Sipaz 2008).[199]

[198] Armando Bartra argues that the government built 200 roads, tarmaced 200 kilometres between Chilpancingo and Atoyac, and ran programmes related to the supply of drinking water and loans for small and medium sized producers, amongst other investments. In 1975, after the assassination of Lucio Cabañas, the governmental investment plummeted and most of the loans for peasants were finished (Bartra 2000a).

[199] In its recommendation 26/200, the National Commission for Human Rights reported 532 disappearances during the dirty war (Sipaz and Tlachinollan 2008).

The implementation of the neo-liberal model and the withdrawal of the State from the economy of Guerrero started with the government of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu (1987-1993).[200] This was clearly reflected in the State Development Plan, presented in 1988, which placed emphasis on the development of the service sector, especially the subsector of tourism. The plan prioritised the construction of assembly plants and the generation of four tourism mega-projects conceived to foster the entry of the state into the global market and attract foreign investment. However, there were also budget cuts by the government, which resulted in the dismantlement of governmental programmes including those that provided benefits to the countryside (Cienfuegos y Carlsen 2003:46). The only sector that was strengthened in those six years were the public forces, whose salaries increased three hundred per cent between 1987 and 1990 (Bartra 2000c.:49).

Paradoxically, the dismantlement of the corporative system strengthened grassroots organisations and revitalised autonomous ones (Bartra 2000:35), which had been seriously affected by clientelistic policies and military repression in the past, something justified by the presence of guerrilla groups (García 2000:103). This situation also helped the civil struggle to be channelled through political opposition parties, in particular through the PRD which was in ascendance at this time.

The state electoral fraud of 1989 combined with governmental violence and intolerance saw the emergence of a civic organised movement, led by the PRD, to defend the vote (Rodríguez W. 2001:439). Post electoral movements spread around different regions of Guerrero. Popular councils were founded as a form of parallel government, and the

[200] As an example of the rapid dismantlement of the corporate State, during Ruiz Massieu's tenure, six out of every ten governmental posts disappeared and 19 of the 39 para-state companies responsible for the countryside suffered the same fate (Bartra 2000c:43).

municipal presidencies of Ometepec, Tlacoachistlahuaca, Xochistlahuaca and Iguala, were besieged. In these localities the municipal authorities belonged to the opposition or was divided (Rodríguez W. 2001:439). There were significant levels of violence in this period and a brutal repression which led to the assassination of members and supporters of the PRD (Gutiérrez 1998:53; Sánchez O. 2001).[201]

Rubén Figueroa Alcocer, governor of Guerrero from 1993-1995, a descendent of revolutionary caudillos, took power and provided continuity to the anti-peasant policy and to a zero tolerance policy against those groups he considered "radical". At the same time, he revived clientelistic procedures with clear electoral criteria. During his three years of tenure, there were 84 political assassinations of political opponents (Gutiérrez 1998:174).[202] One of the best known cases is the aforementioned massacre of Agua Blancas in which 17 members of the OCSS were killed in 1995. This fact generated notable national and international consternation, forcing the governor to resign and initiating a federal investigation. However, to date the intellectual authors of the massacre remain unpunished.

The Organisation of Indigenous Peoples

Until the 1990s, Indigenous peoples were neglected and forgotten by the state. The first indigenous organisation of relevance on Guerrero was the *Consejo Guerrerense 500 Años de Resistencia Indígena, Negra y Popular*, which was formed at the beginning of the decade and joined local organisations who originally protested against the official

[201] Between 1988 and 1994, there were approximately 170 cases of electoral violence in the state, most of which were committed against militants of the PRD by different sectors of the security forces Rojas, Alba (1994) Lista parcial de casos de violencia electoral en el estado de Guerrero, 1988-1994 in Sánchez O. 2001:238.

[202] Sixty three politically motivated killings were reported in the two first years of Ángel Aguirre's government (Gutiérrez 1998: 190).

celebration of the '500 years of the meeting of two worlds'. Subsequently, the council created its own discourse on autonomy and developed a greater capacity for negotiation and protest intended to benefit its members through the construction of roads and other services. It actively collaborated with the Consejo de Pueblos Nahuas del Alto Balsas to impede the construction of a hydroelectric dam in Tetelcingo in 1992 (Hindley 1996a; Nistal y Priego 2007).

The council established important alliances with national indigenous movements such as the Zapatistas and the CNI. However, when they received a large sum of money for their projects from governmental and non-governmental organisations, many problems emerged. The council was divided and did not focus on the defence of territorial rights and on the strengthening of their normative systems (Nistal y Priego 2007:15).

Nowadays, Guerrero is one of the states of the country with the lowest levels of recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples (Nistal y Priego 2007:104). According to some analysts the state legislation is not even in accordance with the spirit of article 2 of the federal Constitution and therefore "almost 500,000 indigenous people are excluded from the state's Constitution" (Matías A. 2001:274).

Guerrero: An Armed State

The presence of different illegal armed groups and military forces in the state has a long historical legacy. Apart from the revolutionary guerrillas formed in the 1960s, there have been guardias blancas (gunmen) who were responsible for protecting private resources of

the local elites or caciques, something several national and international human rights groups have documented.[203]

Maribel Gutiérrez, a well know journalist documented the presence of different armed groups in the region of Guerrero in the 1990s, these groups were: paramilitary, self defense groups and guerrilla. The first one consisted of private groups who have assassinated militants from different political parties, including the PRI, to spread fear with a political objective and to justify the presence of the army. The self-defense groups are peasant organisations that, due to the impunity, assassinations and violence, decided to solve the serious problem of public insecurity by themselves. By rescuing kidnapped people, they have generated a relative sense of security in their regions and due to the success of their early activities, they have been encouraged to "defend themselves in an organised manner". Finally, the guerrillas are part of the historical legacy of violence in the state -particularly since the 1960s- and of the persecution that was subsequently caused during the dirty war. Nowadays, the most important guerrillas are the Popular Revolutionary Army, EPR (Ejército Popular Revolucionario) and the Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent Peoples EPRI (Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente) which has operated in the state since 1998 (Gutiérrez 1998).

Regular military forces that had heavy presence during the 1970s fighting the guerrillas, stepped-up their actions in the 1990s -together with other security forces of the state- under the pretext of three main factors: the Zapatista armed uprising, the reappearance of guerrilla

[203] See reports on Guerrero by the Tlachinollan Centre for Human Rights 2004, the Centro Pro-Juárez 2006, Human Rights Watch/America 1997, Amnesty International 1986, and the Mexican Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights (Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos) 1997.

movements and the federal struggle against drug trafficking. However, according to different human rights organisations, the real objective of the high levels of militarisation of the state was the control of social movements (Centro de Derechos Humanos de La Montaña 2004:202-253; Prodh 2006), and, as a social leader suggests: "the militarisation has been the response of the government to demands and social problems".[204]

Nowadays, the state hosts one sixth of the deployed forces in the country. They have been accused of serious human rights violations that remain unpunished (Sipaz 2008). For example, between 1996 and 2004 the Tlachinollan Centre for Human Rights reported 68 cases of such violations by members of the army (Centro de Derechos Humanos de La Montaña 2005). Amongst the main violations are torture, forced disappearances, sexual attacks, intimidation and illegal interrogation (Nistal y Priego 2007:33). This situation made the demilitarisation of the regions one of the principle objectives of the organised indigenous peoples' struggles.

Results of the Formal Political Shift

On the 6th of February 2005, for the first time in the history of Guerrero, the victory of the opposition in the elections for governor was recognised. However, the power shift did not generate significant changes for civil society in Guerrero in general, nor the indigenous peoples and peasants in particular. The PRD government of Zeferino Torreblanca has shown disinterest in dialogue and work with the civil society. The fifty plus social organisations that form the Front Against Repression and Impunity of Guerrero, FGRI

[204] Interview conducted by Jenny Pearce with Rosío Mesinos, leader of the Peasant Organisation of the Sierra Sur, OCSS (la Organización Campesina de la Sierra Sur), Atoyac Guerrero, August 2000.

(Frente Guerrerense contra la Represión y la Impunidad), agreed that "repression has become the way to govern and practically all spaces for interlocution between the government and civil society have been closed" (FGRI 2008:3).

Since assuming power, Torreblanca has tried to resolve different political and social conflicts through the use of state forces, as was the case of repression and incarceration of teachers and students from the Normal Rural de Ayotzinapa in 2008. Above all, he has refused to act against violent and intimidatory actions directed against social leaders and their movements by both the federal authorities and the local elites. Examples include, the constant harassment of leaders who oppose the construction of the hydroelectric dam of La Parota, the significant number of arrest warrants issued against social and political leaders in Xochistlahuaca and the Community Police in the sub-region of Costa Chica-Montaña, and the assassination of members of the Organisation of the Me'phaa Indigenous Peoples, OPIM (Organización del Pueblo Indígena Me'phaa), to indicate the most recent events.

Despite the gloomy forecast of increasing poverty, violence, militarisation, drug trafficking and the criminalisation of social movements in Guerrero, there is still hope derived from the capacity that some indigenous people and social groups have demonstrated to reinvent and regenerate themselves culturally through many forms of expression and organisation, such as the State Agenda for the Development and Autonomy of the Indigenous Peoples of Guerrero (the version in Spanish is *Agenda Estatal para el Desarrollo y la Autonomía de los Pueblos Indígenas de Guerrero*) (2005), the Front against Repression and Impunity in Guerrero (2008), and many other citizens initiatives. In all of these and in collaboration with different social organisations, the organised indigenous peoples have played a very important role in the search for inclusive, peaceful and alternative solutions for the current

crisis of the State, and a new relationship with it. In parallel, at the local and regional level, they have generated their own initiatives of organisation and struggle such as the Community Police and its System of Security Justice and Re-education, and the Traditional Authorities of Suljaá (Xochistlahuaca). These two cases will be subsequently analysed, highlighting the crisis of the current neoliberal State formation process, as well as the factors that strengthen and challenge these indigenous articulations. Particularly, the case studies will illustrate why the Community Police and its System represent a significant challenge to the implementation of the State neoliberal project through their reinventions of traditional practices and broader alliances, increasing the consolidation of its iniciatives and its possibilities to engage with the State whereas the Traditional Authorities of Suljaá reproduced their traditions and failed to accomplish their alternative self-governing model.

Chapter Seven
Community Police in Costa Chica-Montaña de Guerrero: Reinventing Traditions as an Alternative Response to Justice and Security[205]

We are not against the government, we are against delinquency.
We have invited the government to discuss this in order to understand
why they are not in agreement with the community police.

Leandro Calleja, advisor of the CRAC, San Luis Acatlán, 2002.[206]

The present case study is an example of the multiple responses of organised indigenous peoples to the neoliberal State model, which has represented a significant challenge to it and has consolidated itself thanks to the reinvention of its traditional practises and broader alliances, the creation of an alternative independent project and the determined struggle for an authonomous interaction with the State.

Introduction

The Community Police -that later became part of the Community System of Security, Justice and Re-education (henceforth referred to as 'the System') - was created as a collective response to the lack of action on the part of the Mexican State in terms of controlling and resolving the increase in violence, the lack of security and the impunity in the region known as Costa Chica-Montaña de Guerrero, which was mostly inhabited by indigenous peoples. Communities organised themselves into different assemblies in response to a greater State abandonment and desperation, reinstating some of their

[205] The idea of re-invention of traditions was taken from E. Hobsbawm´s book titled the invention of tradition (Hobsbawm 1983).
[206] Video-interview by Pérez Rojas, C. (2002). Cuando la justicia se hace pueblo. México, Promedios de Comunicación Comunitaria.

traditional practices and adapting them to the social political context and to the existing national and international legislation.[207]

Both the Community Police and the System have developed exogenous to the framework of the Mexican State. This has meant a constant challenge to the state apparatus because of its efficiency and legitimacy, which has generated organisational processes that have spread out and stretched the limits of other initiatives of community justice that have been recently fostered by the State and therefore are shaped and monitored by it (Sierra 2006:9).[208]

The relationship between State authorities and the Community Police has gone from open cooperation to repression, reacting to political changes and to the increasingly organised response of indigenous communities that belong to the System. Since it was founded, the Community Police established contact with governmental authorities, always seeking to dialogue with different levels of government. Without exception, its public documents and discourses highlight the importance of coordination with the State, and demand the System be respected as an organisation of communitarian justice that remains independent from governmental structures. Therefore, it has persistently refused to be incorporated within official proposals, which has been the only alternative offered so far by the authorities of the State.

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[207] For many decades, indigenous peoples have exerted their organisational forms and judicial practices in order to solve their conflicts. However, it was not until 2001 when some of them were recognised by the State. The presence of the community police is not new in indigenous communities. In many municipalities, predominantly indigenous, and especially in their police stations, similar functions to those of the Community Police are carried out. For example, in some Nahuatl communities, there are law enforcement officers called *tlahcuilolohua,* night police (*yahualtlahpixqueh)*, prison security personnel *(tetzacua)*, cattle police (*yolcatlahpixqueh*), and water police (*pilapixqueh*). In the Mixteca communities, there is a commander in charge of public security (*comandanti)*; in Amuzga communities there are commanders (*ts´amaseint´t´on*) and police officers (*juntaaiochom*); and in Tlapaneca communities, there are commanders (*Xnixi*) and police (*policía*) (Pastenes H. 2002:23-24).

[208] The creation of indigenous courts has been part of the response of some Latin American countries to modernise and decentralise the state apparatus in order to contribute to de-bureaucratising and encouraging new forms of access to justice (Sieder 2006; Sierra 2006:2).

The context in which the Community Police and the System were developed will be subsequently analysed together with their scope, their relationship with the different levels of the government, their main strengths, the challenges they face in the process of consolidation, and the challenge they represent to the neo-liberal model of the Mexican State.

Creation of the Community Police

> *[The Community Police was created] due to an unbearable situation, we have complained hundreds of times to the corresponding authorities because there is no response from any of them to the fact that we are daily victims of assaults, sexual violations, robberies, injuries and homicides, so we were forced to seize the following agreement […]*
>
> Constitutional Act of the Community Police, 15th October 1995[209]

Since the 1990s, the number of crimes recorded in the region of Costa Chica-Montaña rapidly increased. Amongst the most serious reported by indigenous communities to governmental authorities were robbery, rape, cattle raiding, kidnapping and various activities related to drug trafficking. The situation worsened due to the absence of efficient responses by state representatives and the perceived complicity of those with the delinquents, highlighting constant "systematic patterns of violence that seemed more akin to organised crime than isolated cases" (Sánchez S. 2003:293).

The situation was analysed in different community assemblies, and different measures to stifle the crime wave against the inhabitants of this region were suggested. Proposals

[209] Document from the following electronic source www.policíacomunitaria.org last accessed: 31st July 2007.

ranged from the formation of self-defence neighbours and families organisations to "lynch mobs" (Pérez Rojas 2002).[210]

In November 1992, in the community of Santa Cruz del Rincón, in the municipality of Malinaltepec, the parish representative, together with members of social organisations, producers and *ejidos,* decided to create the Council of Indigenous Authorities, CAIN (Consejo de Autoridades Indígenas) which served as a space to analyse and address the possible causes of violence and insecurity in the region.

The armed uprising of the EZLN, in January 1994, had a potent impact on community organisation. Since then, the CAIN began to emphasis the importance of recognising and reinforcing indigenous rights, collective identity and the organisational autonomy of the region (Morales Almaguer 2004:270-4). In 1994, there were three community assemblies – in Pazcala Oro, Tlaxcalixtlahuaca and San Luis Acatlán – in order to discuss and take action to rectify the problem of insecurity and the incapacity of the authorities to act and stop the growing violence in the region. The governmental authorities were invited to participate but did not attend any of the three events. In September 1995, the first force of voluntary police officers was formed in Cuanacaxtitlan, in the municipality of San Luis Acatlán, to take care of the community and the surrounding area.[211]

[210] This is a particularly dangerous situation because these has been an extreme response by the communities due to their desperation and the widespread impunity. In an interesting research, Jesús Ramírez Cuevas describes the rite of community lynching as part of the violence in rural Mexico. This research reported that between 1984 and 2001, there were 294 cases of community lynching, 178 (which is more than 60%) in rural areas (Ramírez Cuevas 2005:3-5). This information was confirmed with a research made by Carlos Vilas that examines that from 1987 until 1998, 73 percent of the lynching took place in the rural area (Vilas 2001).

[211] Interview with Nicolás de la Cruz Manzano, member of the Community Police station of Cuanacaxtitlan, San Luis Acatlán, 17th February 2005.

On the 15th of October 1995, in an assembly that took place in Santa Cruz del Rincón, 36 representatives of community authorities together with members of the parish and local producers' organisations decided to create the Community Police in order to protect the population of those participating communities through the surveillance and security of the transport infrastructure (Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad 2004:10).[212] After the assembly, a constitutional act was proposed and taken before a public notary to get an official certificate and a commission of representatives was appointed to go to the capital of the state, Chilpancingo, to inform the authorities and the judicial police about the decision of the community (Cienfuegos Salgado 2005:622).

Initially, the Community Police detained delinquents and then brought them before the law so that justice could be applied. In this early phase, governmental authorities tolerated such practices. However, as a former Community Police officer points out: "due to the widespread impunity and corruption of the State's system of justice, those detainees would be released, would re-offend and in some cases carry out revenge attacks against the community authorities that had handed them to the authorities".[213]

In view of this situation, community authorities and the population convened an assembly to discuss the close relationship and complicity between local caciques, delinquents and governmental authorities, highlighting that: "the caciques of San Luis Acatlán, those mainly related to cattle farming and trade gave weapons to the delinquents who were aided

[212] Coffee organisations such as Luz de la Montaña, Unión Regional Campesina, Consejo Guerrerense 500 años de Resistencia Indígena, Negra y Popular, Consejo de Autoridades Indígenas, Triple S Café-Maíz, Consejo Comunitario de Abasto and Parroquia de Santa Cruz el Rincón were the main groups involved in its creation (Rosas 2005).
[213] Interview with Bruno Plácido, CRAC advisor, Metlatónoc, 24th January 2005.

by a complicit judiciary that would release them".[214] Likewise, members of the Community Police observed that the authorities of the public prosecution service "were more interested in economic benefit than in public security so they would release delinquents in exchange for the payment of bail, without dispensing justice and without the reparation of damages being made to the victim".[215] Finally, they realised that delinquents did not understand that they were doing something wrong because they were being released, thus they would commit crime again.[216]

All this took place through a framework wherein justice was practically inaccessible for the indigenous population of the region because most public courts are located in urban areas that are distant and consequently require the expenditure of both time and money to transport people.

Once more, in an assembly that took place in 1998 in the community of Potrerillo Cuapinole, in the municipality of San Luis Acatlán, the community discussed the situation and decided to broaden the community policing project through the creation of an additional independent body called the Regional Coordinator of Communitarian Authorities, CRAC (Coordinadora Regional de Autoridades Comunitarias). This would include a comprehensive system of administration and the implementation of justice and would substitute the CAIN. Accordingly, the Community System of Security, Justice and Re-education was consolidated, covering these two independent bodies that coordinated the

[214] Interview with Bruno Plácido, CRAC advisor, by Pérez Rojas, *ibid*.
[215] Interview with Modesto Galindo, commander and member of the executive committee of the CRAC, San Luis Acatlán, 18th February 2005.
[216] Interview with Valentín Hernández, legal adviser, San Luis Acatlán, 19th February 2005.

operations and actions regarding security and the implementation of justice (de la Torre Rangel 2005:578).[217]

The Community System of Security, Justice and Re-education

The System is a combination of customary and statutory law, designed to solve conflicts and promote justice and security in the jurisdiction of the communities that have approved it through the assembly. This combination created what Rachel Sieder calls a hybrid legal space (Sieder 2006). The indigenous system of governance upon which it is based, covers the resolution of cases through community assemblies, the intervention of the elders,[218] the Community Police – as part of the obligatory community posts - and the search for reconciliation amongst the parties in order to maintain harmony within the group. This is combined with the establishment of internal rules,[219] based on national and international legislation, more specifically articles 2, 39, 115 and 139 of the Mexican Constitution, the municipal organic law of Guerrero and Convention 169 of the ILO particularly article 9, which deals with indigenous rights and their own system of justice (CRAC 2005).

[217] It is very important to emphasise this separation because governmental authorities have tried to de-legitimise the System calling it illegal because "they act as public attorneys, judges and police". Recently, Victor Alejandro Arrellano, judge of San Luis Acatlán, publicly declared that the Community Police was the body that violated human rights the most since "it was judge and party of the cases it intervened in" (Chávez 2007).

[218] The elders are considered as "the wisest or the ones who know best" because they have carried out themselves all or almost all community posts and services. They are very well respected in the community and have high rank posts. Interview with Evaristo Ramírez Silva, commander of the Community Police, Yoloxochil, 17th February 2005.

[219] The introduction of a written set of rules differs from customary law because traditional indigenous law follows unwritten rules.

Since 1999, the Tlachinollan Centre for Human Rights has worked closely with the System to legally support its development, especially in relation to human and indigenous rights.[220] Similarly, the System has constant support from legal advisors who have followed the process of judicial strengthening and, in some cases, have conducted the defense of the System.[221]

The System operates on the principle of privileging reconciliation over punishment, reparation over criminalisation and re-education over penalisation, all of these are carried out without any ethnic, religious or gender discrimination (Martínez Sifuentes 2001:31). The process of re-education is particularly interesting because of the original assumption that the fault of the detainee is not only an individual responsibility, but also a community responsibility. Therefore, it is important that in addition to making "a real reparation of damages to the victim, the community elders talk to the detainee and make him/her understand the error of their ways".[222] In this sense, the logic of the System of re-education is that the "citizen who made a mistake understands it, accepts it and repairs it".[223]

This is why the sentences do not have a definitive time period but rather depend on the behaviour and the re-education process of the detainees during their community work. Hence, freedom is acquired when the municipal commissioners and the elders decree it is so. Moreover, when the detainee is released, there is a public event at which a document is signed recording the commitment of the detainee, his or her family, and the municipal

[220] Interview with Abel Barreda, President of the Tlachinollan Centre for Human Rights, Chilpancingo, 17th August 2004.
[221] Valentín Hernández has collaborated with the System since 1998, first with the INI and then as part of the legal branch of the organisation. Interview carried out in San Luis Acatlán, 19th February 2005.
[222] Bruno Plácido, CRAC advisor, in the regional assembly of the community of El Carmen-San Luis Acatlán, 20th February 2005.
[223] Interview with Jaime Santos Delgado, CRAC superintendent, Malinaltepec, 18th February 2005.

commissioner, thus everyone takes responsibility for the future behaviour of the released person and "Re-education becomes another form of reparation".[224] This process facilitates the reconstruction of the social fabric and the true reincorporation of the perpetrator who commited a fault to the community (Morales Almaguer 2004:280).

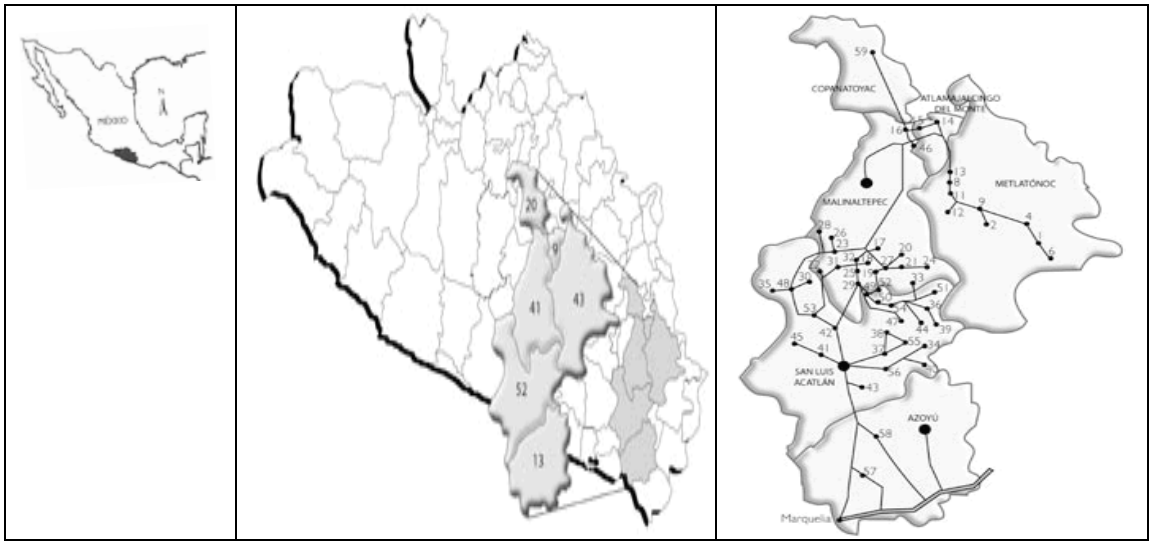
Punishments depend upon the type of crime committed. For minor crimes -i.e. minor thefts, public scandals and intra-family problems- issues are resolved in the Community Police station. However, for graver types of crime –i.e. drug trafficking, violent assault, homicide or rape- cases are taken to the Coordinator of Regional Community Authorities, CRAC, in San Luis Acatlán. If the detainee is found accountable, he or she is sentenced to community work for fifteen days in each one of the participating communities of the System until the elders and the commissioner in charge consider that they have been re-educated. The most frequent community tasks undertaken are building or repairing paths, schools, churches and bridges, amongst other works for the different participant communities. The detainee works six days a week and is fed by the community within which he or she is working; they sleep behind bars in the community police station, and on weekends, they are required to meet the elders but are also allowed to receive visits from family members.

Judicial Dimension of the Community Process

The System has expanded its jurisdiction beyond its geographic and ethnic limits. It covers two regions in the state of Guerrero: la Costa Chica and La Montaña. The System includes the participation of approximately 65 communities of 10 municipalities in San Luis Acatlán, Marquelia, Malinaltepec, Iliatenco, Metlatónoc, Atlamajalcingo del Monte,

[224] Interview with Valentín Hernández, legal advisor, San Luis Acatlán, 19th February 2005.

Cochoapa el Grande, Copanatoyac, Xalpatlahuac and Tlapa de Comonfort, where members of Mixteca, Tlapaneca, Nahua and mestizo communities live. On average, there are around 600 community police officers.[225]



Map of the region Costa Chica-Montaña, where the Community System of Security, Justice and Re-education operates (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2004:113).

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Region

The System operates in one of the regions with the highest indigenous population in the state of Guerrero, also considered the poorest and most marginalised of the country as indicated in the socio-economic indexes analyses (see appendix II). Eleven of the seventeen municipalities in the region of La Montaña are considered "very highly marginalised" or "in extreme poverty" (Conapo 2004). For example, Metlatónoc is the municipality with the lowest human development index in Mexico (Borja-Vega 2007:82). The majority of its inhabitants survive on subsistence agriculture, based on primary crops and limited

[225] The number of communities and municipalities that have participated in the System has varied considerably over the twelve years of its existence although overall it has increased. In the most recent information available on their webpage, there are 26 Mixteca, 27 Tlapaneca, 5 Nahua and 7 mestizo communities. Information from the System's website www.policíacomunitaria.org accessed on 31st of July 2007.

production of arts and crafts for sale. Due to insufficient resources, many communities receive the support of different benefits' programmes from the federal government such as Oportunidades, Procampo, Mano a Mano and Arranque Parejo (APV)[226] amongst others.

Regarding the levels of literacy, 72% of the population of Metlatónoc are illiterate; while in Copanatoyac and Atlamajancingo del Monte, 55.3% and 67.0% of the populations respectively are illiterate, considerably more than the national average of 50.5%. In addition, 90% of the population of the municipalities that are covered by the System do not have medical services (INI 2002).

The employment opportunities also evidence the exclusion. 85.4% of Metlatónoc's population do not have formal incomes; in other municipalities such as San Luis Acatlán, levels of unemployment average at 58% of the population. For this reason, the Tlachinollan Centre for Human Rights states that "many families have to leave La Montaña annually to escape hunger" (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2004:25). This situation mainly affects young people who, in the traditional rural setting, do not manage to integrate themselves as land owners or producers, hence end up being excluded from social structures and local policies (Rowland 2003:10).

Consequently, the Costa Chica-Montaña is a subregion of high migration, particularly towards the agricultural fields in the North of the country and the United States of America. Different government agencies consider that Guerrero ranks first at the national level in

[226] However, as Abel Barreda points out, these kinds of programmes individualise the support and do not help the communities resolve their problems in a collective way. Interview with Abel Barreda, president of the Tlachinollan Centre for Human Rights, Chilpancingo, 17th of August 2004.

internal economic migration and fifth in external economic migration (INI-CONAPO 2000).

Most of the members of the System are indigenous peoples and peasants who, apart from the activities they conduct within the System, work the lands as *ejido* owners and therefore are directly affected by the marginalisation and poverty at the rural level. Such a situation has exacerbated with the implementation of the neo-liberal model complete with the policies of privatisation and the abandonment of the countryside by the State.

Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Different sectors of the population felt that crimes and insecurity had notably decreased in communities where the Community Police and the System operated. In this sense, different producers and civil organisations believe that the project has been successful because it has managed to reduce insecurity by more than 90% (Martínez Sifuentes 2001:12; Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2004:125; Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad 2004:23; Rojas 2005; Sierra 2006:15). Even the governmental authorities that were interviewed recognised that despite the "illegal character" of the Community Police, levels of insecurity have dropped "considerably" in the places where it has been in operation.[227]

[227] Gerardo Reyes confirmed that during his term as municipal president of San Luis Acatlán (1996-1999), the Community Police managed to reduce insecurity by 90% according to official statistics. Interview carried out in San Luis Acatlán on the 9th of February 2005. The perception of the reduction of levels of insecurity was confirmed in interviews carried out on that same date with other governmental officials such as América Berum, and another public authority representative who declined to be identified.

There are some quantitative and qualitative indicators, which offer empirical evidence on the advance of the System regarding security and justice in the region. Amongst the most important ones are the increasing number of municipalities and communities that have willingly joined the System in the last few years,[228] and its economic efficiency regarding its budget, especially in contrast with the cost of official security and justice.[229] Qualitatively, the System has solved 60% of the cases through conciliation, pending processes are few and repeat offences of those re-educated are almost nil.[230] Furthermore, the population, both indigenous and mestizo, prefers the System to other governmental offices of peace courts of the judiciary.[231]

In an interview with América Berum, official of the peace courts in San Luis Acatlán, she noted that the "number of cases has decreased because the population prefers to take their cases before the 'communitarians' because they find a quicker solution there. In contrast, we have to follow more prolonged procedures and rules, they don't... Hence people prefer to resolve their conflicts there". She pointed out that in 2004, there were only 24 cases and to date in 2005, there had not been any.[232]

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[228] At the beginning of the System, there were 32 communities from three municipalities, and in 2007, the number increased to 65 communities from ten municipalities. Information obtained from www.policíacomunitaria.org accessed on the 8th of August 2007.

[229] The economic cost of the System for the period 2004-2005 was approximately $75,000 US, according to financial reports presented in the annual assembly that took place in the community of El Carmen, San Luis Acatlán, on the 20th of February 2005. It is important to note that there are many other resources in kind given by the communities and members of the System for its operation. Although it is difficult to measure such contributions, they are one of the main providers of support to the System. Amongst the most significant non-monetary contributions are the voluntary work of most of the participants, the donation of food and other materials and logistical support.

[230] In this sense, during the period 2004-2005 the CRAC resolved, through conciliation, 267 cases which represent 67% of a total of 400 cases in that year (CRAC 2005:9).

[231] Interview with América Berum, official of the Peace Courts, San Luis Acatlán, 9th of February 2005.

[232] *Ibid*.

The Ambiguous Relationship with the Mexican State: Between Hidden Tolerance and Repression.

Different governments and the structures of the national State inherited a legacy of repressive and undignifying methods that insist on excluding and denigrating us. They have built a State system of justice that privileges the force and stamps on our collective rights as the most efficient resource to categorise our normative systems outside a concept of legality that they have imposed upon us.

CRAC, Declaration on the 10th Anniversary, October 2005, Pueblo Hidalgo, Guerrero.

One element which is consistent in the literature, public statements and interviews with members of the System is the permanent intention to be part of the legal framework of the Mexican State,[233] and "the idea is not to face the State or to be outside the law but to coordinate and cooperate with constitutional authorities within the frame of mutual respect and equality"[234]

The relationships of the System with different levels of the government have changed with time and have depended considerably on the political context and the personality of government officials at different levels. In this context, such relationships have moved from congratulatory and openly cooperative to threats of dismantlement, accusations about their links with guerrilla groups and the detention of its members.[235]

[233] Information confirmed in Martínez Sifuentes 2001:48; Hernández C. and Ortiz 2003; Morales Almaguer 2004:218; De la Torre Rangel 2005:579; CRAC 2005[a].

[234] Participation of Valentín Hernández, legal advisor, in the Fifth Congress of the Latin American International Network: Legal Anthropology, Justice and Diversity in the Globalisation Era, Oaxtepec,19th of October 2006.

[235] The state government has accused them without any evidence of links with the guerrillas of the EPR and EPRI through different media (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2004:117). They were also accused of being members of the PRD, with "the risk of becoming paramilitary or fragmenting themselves to become *guardias blancas*" (Martínez Sinfuentes E. 2002:48-9). In a column in the *Diario 17 de Acapulco* they were accused of being a group of illiterate people armed to their teeth committing acts of injustice" (*ibíd*.:66).

In 1995, when the Community Police began its activities, there was an official implicit acknowledgement and even a positive relationship with federal and local authorities. In fact, in 1998, president Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) publicly acknowledged their work in San Luis Acatlán (Sánchez S. 2003:295). For its part, the governor of the state of Guerrero, Ángel Aguirre (1997-1999), gave them 22 rifles (M1 and M2 types) and a car (Pastenes H. 2002:12), while battalion 48 of the Mexican infantry trained them on three occasions between 1995 and 1997 (Avilés 1997; Rojas 2005).[236]

However, in 1998, when the organisations and the members of the Community Police decided to administer and exert justice through the creation of the CRAC, exceeding the limits authorised by the State, repression against its members increased through harassment, persecution, the fabrication of crimes and the gradual disarmament of the Community Police´s members by the judicial police and the army (Sipaz 2005:4-5).

The years 2000 and 2001 were the most difficult ones for the relationship between members of the System and governmental authorities because a negative press campaign was stepped up and several arrest warrants were issued against the coordinators of the CRAC.[237] Key leaders of the System were unjustly arrested (Martínez Sifuentes 2001:62) and then released thanks to a broad social and political protest.[238]

[236] This information was verified in an interview with Gerardo Reyes Ortega, municipal president of San Luis Acatlán (1996-1999), in San Luis Acatlán on 9th of February 2005. The training courses offered by the army to the Community Police´s members focused on weapons training, legislation and security.
[237] There are still arrest warrants active against CRAC commissioners for various different crimes such as: illegal detention, use of arms, kidnap, abuse of authority, illegal arrests, and forcing people into hard labour. The warrants are discretely implemented during periods of political turbulence (SIPAZ 2005; CRAC 2007).
[238] On the website of the Community Police, it states that more than 4,000 indigenous and mestizo peoples marched to demand their release. The newspapers *El Sur de Acapulco* and *La Jornada* broadly reported this fact between the 10th and the 12th of July 2000.

René Juárez Cisnero, governor of Guerrero between 1999 and 2005, offered some economic and military resources to the System at the beginning of his tenure. However, he insisted on the necessity of institutionalising the Community Police as part of the local Minister of Public Security of the state in order to achieve better coordination (Pastenes H. 2002:15). This proposal was rejected by members of the System. Later on, governmental authorities again insisted upon "incorporation" of the Community Police to the government as auxiliaries of the municipal police. The proposal was rejected after a lengthy discussion in a general assembly, and it was highlighted that the Community Police were independent and did not want to be part of the official police: "the Community Police do not respond to the government but to the people in assembly".[239] In July 2000, the state Minister of indigenous affairs insisted that the members of the Community Police could be recognised, accredited and received a small stipend for their work against crime in the region. However, he added that it was impossible to recognise the System's administration and implementation of justice. Hence, the proposal was again rejected.

In January 2001, the congress of the state of Guerrero announced that the Community Police was illegal and was not going to be included in the new law of public security because it acted as lawyer, judge and police. Representatives of the System replied that the body in charge of administering justice was not the Community Police but the CRAC and that it had been elected by regional community assemblies thus its decisions were based on the customs and traditions of the people and on national and international legislation (CRAC 2005a:4-5).

[239] Interview with Leandro Calleja, Community Police officer, San Luis Acatlán, 10th February 2005.

In February 2002, authorities from the Minister of Public Security, the state General Attorney, and the army, requested the CRAC and the Community Police dismantled themselves otherwise the weapons would be confiscated and arrest warrants would be issued against all the members of the System. This tense situation led to negotiations between governmental authorities and the System. However, there was no agreement (Sánchez S. 2003:298). Once again, there were massive social protests supporting the System and the state authorities desisted with their threats.

The members of the System insisted upon the importance of negotiating in order to reach agreement with the different levels of government. On the 18th of June 2004, members of the CRAC called state authorities to a meeting in the municipality of Tlapa to discuss a proposal on the status of the Community Police. State authorities demanded the System be dismantled and that Community Police 'officers' registered as part of the municipal preventive police. After the meeting, representatives of the System decided to carry out a regional consultation in which participating communities would make a final decision on the proposals of the state authorities. Each community voted and issued an act on the results. Finally, the proposal was rejected by every participating community (Sipaz 2005:4).

Since then, the System has been considered illegal by every agency of both state and federal authorities.[240] Xóchil Gálvez, director of the National Council of Indigenous Peoples, CNPI (Consejo Nacional para los Pueblos Indígenas) 2001-2006, expressed in a meeting with members of the System that: "the problem with the Community Police is that

[240] The illegality of the System and its Community Police was clearly mentioned in every interview with public officials. Interviews with Omar Gervasio Rodríguez, executive secretary of the Secretaría de Seguridad Pública on the 21st February 2005; Ardin Coss, advisor of the Consejo Estatal de Seguridad Pública; Gonzalo Santos Salazar, auxiliary secretary of the Tribunal Superior de Justicia del Estado de Guerrero, Chilpancingo; and, América Berum, official of the peace courts in San Luis Acatlán on the 9th February 2005.

it is illegal in judicial terms and therefore a mechanism of legality needs to be found, we can help but we must respect the law" (Pérez Rojas 2002).

Some members of the System believe that the refusal of the government to recognise them as an independent organisation is because "recognising the Community Police would mean official acceptance of the incapacity of the official police and the State to provide security and justice in the region".[241]

One of the most controversial elements and sources of tension between the System and the government is the use and possession of arms. Members of the System say that arms are necessary to conduct their functions because they patrol roads, provide security for public transport, and offer security to the entire population. They further argue that the weapons are primarily personal such as one-shot rifles or belong to neighbours of the communities. By the end of 2001, the System reported the possession of five hundred arms, most of which belonged to the communities, others had been donated by the state and municipal authorities and a third group of weapons had been confiscated from criminals (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2004:123).

The relationship with the Federal Authorities has also been ambiguous. As previously noted, at the beginning, the army trained members of the Community Police but subsequently confiscated its weapons. In 2000, there were four incidents of disarmament in the communities of Marquelia, Pueblo Hidalgo, Pascal de Oro and Arroyo Mixtecolapa (Sánchez S. 2003:297; Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2004). Some members of the System argue that the relationship with the army depends upon the personal

[241] Interview with Bruno Plácido, CRAC advisor, Metlatónoc, 24th February 2005.

relationship with the commander responsible for the region: "if he is really worried about the security of the region, he recognises the efficiency of the System and supports our activities; but if he disapproves it, the situation becomes complicated and relations tense".[242]

Despite all this, members of the System have tried to maintain a stable relationship with the army. Therefore, each year, they pass information to battalion 48 with the names and photographs of Community Police officers and commanders and a register of their weapons.[243]

Similarly, the relationship between the judicial police and the Community Police is ridden with contradictions. There have been periods in which both forces have cooperated and coordinated operations together. On many occasions the judicial police have requested assistance from the Community Police in capturing criminals and carrying out investigations in the region, "recognising that we know the area, roads and towns better and people in the communities trust us and give us information".[244] Nonetheless, the judicial police have been the state authority that has harassed and arrested more members of the System.

[242] Interview with Agustín Barrera, founding member and commander of the Community Police, San Luis Acatlán, 10th of February 2005.
[243] Information derived from www.policíacomunitari.org accessed on 31st July 2006.
[244] Interview with Modesto Galindo, commander and member of the executive committee of the CRAC, San Luis Acatlán, 18th of February 2005, and Valentín Hernández, legal advisor, San Luis Acatlán, 19th February 2005.

Relations with Municipal Authorities

The relationship between the System and the municipal authorities in the region has also varied greatly from period to period depending on the personality of the municipal president and his political party. At the beginning, the municipal leaders of San Luis Acatlán and Malinaltepec –PRD supporter- were the main advocates of the System through the donation of different resources such as fuel, and other economic resources for their different activities. For example, Gerardo Reyes Ortega, municipal president of San Luis Acatlán (1996-1999) supported the Community Police with twenty weapons (L1s), a pickup truck, and a donation of the land upon which the offices were located.[245] Similarly, Melquíades G. Ramírez, president of the municipality of Malinaltepec (1997-1999), contributed significantly with the donation of radio transmitters and other economic support.[246]

During fieldwork conducted between 2004 and 2005, the author observed the close relationship between the System and the municipal presidents of San Luis Acatlán, Malinaltepec and Metlatónoc, all of them PRD supporters; there was good coordination between the two and municipal leaders provided important support for the System.[247] However, there were problems with the municipal leader of Marquelia, a PRI supporter, who refused to recognise the Community Police despite the fact that two of the communities of the municipality, Capulín Chocolate and Zoyatlán, were part of the System.

[245] Interview with Gerardo Reyes Ortega, municipal president of San Luis Acatlán (1996-1999), San Luis Acatlán, 9th of February 2005.
[246] Interview with Román García Castro, municipal attorney of public security, Malinaltepec, 18th February 2005.
[247] This information was also confirmed in a community assembly in El Carmen on February 20, 2005, where the annual activities report accounted for the income and outgoings of the System. The three municipalities had provided economic resources directly to the System for its expenses.

Even in very tense moments the municipal leader had refused to stamp the credentials of Community Police officers, so they were forced to use copies from the community assemblies as their only source of legitimacy required to carry out their functions (Martínez Sifuentes 2001:47).

The municipal support of the System has been expressed in two different ways. On the one hand, they received direct funding from "friendly" municipalities using funds from the budget for municipal public security area, or from support for the strengthening of the municipality. On the other hand, there has been indirect support in the form of fuel, allowances and other economic compensation. However, as members of the System have acknowledged, this informal and discretional process of funding can affect its sustainable development in the long term.[248]

In October 2006, new municipal leaders were elected in Guerrero. In San Luis Acatlán the PRI candidate, Santa Cruz Nava, was elected. He had publicly manifested his opposition to the System and declared the Community Police illegal, further threatening to summon the army to dismantle it through his public security director, Gustavo Castro.[249] The situation generated deep tension and hostility, and the System lost political and economic support from one of its former municipal alliances. This is particularly relevant because in San Luis Acatlán it has its headquarters.

[248] Román García Castro recognised that the municipality of Malinaltepec has found it difficult to justify its support for the System because it is considered illegal by the federal and state government although they have look for alternative means to support it at the municipal level with some material and logistic support. Interview conducted in the municipal presidency of Malinaltepec, 18th February 2005.
[249] CRAC (2006), CRAC press release, San Luis Acatlán, October 2006.

In November 2006, in the community assembly in Horcasitas, participants discussed the lack of economically sustainable resources and debated the "necessity of applying pressure to the city hall, demanding resources for the Community Police through the mobilisation of the people if necessary".[250]

The Impact of the Alternation of Political Parties in the State of Guerrero

At first, some members of the System viewed the victory of the PRD candidate Zeferino Torreblanca in 2005 with optimism and hope. In contrast, others were sceptical and apprehensive because of his business sector origins and his limited linkages with social movements in Guerrero.

Regarding indigenous peoples, during his campaign, the PRD candidate stressed that: "we have to implement programmes that were left pending in the law of Cocopa regarding indigenous autonomy and the Community Police and create a judicial framework through which to acknowledge and respect their customs and means of organisation and authority". Regarding indigenous justice, the candidate posited: "of course we will ensure their system of justice is respected because it is innovative and a result of the difficulty faced by indigenous persons in defending themselves in court, and I think they should be incorporated into a new system. In this way we will avoid resistance because there are false advocates of indigenism who exploit it in order to climb the political ladder" (Pacheco L. 2005).

[250] Act of the assembly celebrated in Horcasitas, San Luis Acatlán 24th-26th of November 2006, manuscript.

Once Torreblanca was elected as governor of Guerrero, Zósimo Avilés, commissioner of Santa Cruz del Rincón, encouraged him to "give the Community Police the opportunity to develop for the benefit of the communities and try not to view it as the enemy, as previous PRI governments -who tried to make it disappear- did". He added: "we have told the government that maybe they are legitimised by the State but we are legitimised by the people because we answer to a regional assembly of 62 communities of five municipalities of Costa Chica and La Montaña" (Contreras 2005). Since then, representatives of the System have tried to meet with the PRD governor to explain that: "we are not asking for the community System to be acknowledged but respected".[251] However, the situation is still ambiguous because the governor has not agreed to meet them and the harassment from State agents and issuance of arrest warrants for members of the System continue (Nistal and Priego 2007:50).

In sum, due to the creation of the CRAC as the body responsible for the implementation of a parallel system of justice, the relationship between the federal and state governments and the Community Police has been characterised by a lack of acknowledgement and persecution on the part of the former (Hernández C. and Ortiz 2003:13). The political elite have manipulated public opinion with an erroneous interpretation of this experience of organisational autonomy and independence, associating it with subversion and illegality. Some analysts suggest that what is behind their position is the fear of losing control over what they consider their traditional sources of power: The subordinated and unconditional support of indigenous peoples and peasants (Pastenes H. 2002; Bartra 2004).

[251] Interview with Jaime Santos Delgado, CRAC Superintendent, Malinaltepec, 18th February 2005.

For this reason, every organisations or mobilisation that is independent of the structure of the State is deemed as a potential danger both for the governmental authorities and for the local elites that were previously considered "untouchable". However, the most troublesome concern is that State agents do not have the capacity to interact with autonomous organisations that have been building their own political and social projects, so actions against them are increasingly hostile and include open repression. Due to this situation, some members of the System have begun to radicalise their discourse and have proposed actions that could generate a higher level of conflict with State authorities.

Conceptualisations of the Reformulation of the Mexican State

The laws were not made by the people,
maybe if they were, they would include us more.

CRAC, *Information Bulletin*, October 2006

If we want to change the world,
we have to change ourselves.

Attendant to the General Assembly,
community of El Carmen, 20th of February 2005.

In October 2005, during the tenth anniversary of the Community Police, there were several different discussion groups initiated to analyse the situation and generate proposals. As a general conclusion of the event, it was agreed that the reasons for the creation of the Community Police were not the same any more and that there were new types of crime and insecurity in the region for them to deal with, so they should: "think about security and justice as part of the defence of their territory, the protection of natural resources, the search for food security, the implementation of fair trade, and the active participation of women in

all those arenas, in other words, the popular building of a new national project" (CRAC 2005).

The discussion and the results reached in Discussion Group Three on the topic of "popular building of a new national project" were particularly interesting. There were two clear trends regarding the reform of the Mexican State and the existing Constitution. One trend considered the Constitution was limited and inefficient; therefore, it was necessary to modify it because it did not represent the interests and rights of indigenous peoples, especially because of the modifications that the recent neo-liberal governments had made to it such as the privatisation of the *ejido* and the entry into force of the NAFTA. The second trend argued that the situation of the indigenous peoples of Guerrero would not change by the modification of the Constitution and that "the solution is within ourselves" and the struggle should focus on "forming a popular government that implements autonomous processes" and that concentrates mainly on "the creation of an alternative power from below to promote the comprehensive development of society" (Trigo 2005).

These two trends have framed the discussion about the relationship with the State and other political actors, especially political parties. However, due to increase repression and lack of political will from the governing elites to openly analyse and discuss about justice and security in the region, *de facto* autonomy '*a la* Zapatista' is increasingly being considered the best option.[252] This position was reaffirmed on the 18th April 2006 during the visit of Subcomandante Marcos and the Zapatista delegates of the Otra Campaña in which "it was insisted on the necessity of implementing the accords of San Andrés through action" (CRAC 2007).

[252] This means the establishment of a regional organisational process without the recognition of the State.

It is important to point out that the members of the System have been very careful concerning the term "autonomy". In that sense, in 2001 priest Mario Campos declared: "we are not talking about autonomy because that is a word that causes an itch, but we practise it" (Rojas 2005). Valentín Hernández, legal advisor of the System commented that: "the national indigenous movement has fostered the concept of autonomy and how to build it. Here people are not interested in naming the concept but they have autonomy without talking about it. Really, we don't need to define it but people to own the concept in practice and live it."[253] According to Hernández, academics are the ones who have decided to name community processes and conceptualise them. He thinks that "here people are working and realising they need an efficient system of security and justice... over there, people spend time naming processes because that is what they do, that is they work".[254]

Between Tradition and Change: Strengths and Challenges of the Community Police and the System

Main Strengths

Deborah Yashar points out that the emergence and strengthening of indigenous movements in Latin America can be explained by the simultaneous convergence of three key factors: motive, capacity and opportunity to act (Yashar 2005). These factors can be useful indicators in the exploration and systematisation of the particular case of the Community Police and the System.

[253] Interview with Valentín Hernández, legal advisor, San Luis Acatlán, 19th of February 2005.
[254] Interview with Valentín Hernández by Zósimo Camacho (2007). "Policía Comunitaria rebasa al gobierno", Revista *Contralínea*, México, **5** (70).

Regarding the catalytic trigger for action, the Community Police and, subsequently, the System emerged as a response to the crisis caused by violence, insecurity and the lack of action by the Mexican State in the region. This intensified in the 1990s with the accelerated implementation of the neo-liberal model and the consequent bigger State abandonment of the countryside. However, the community organisation transcended the original causes of its creation -i.e. self-protection, resistance and conservation of their culture and traditional practises- in order to build a process that was alternative, inclusive and expansive and has developed its own political process with a vision of the future. Likewise, most of the members of the System have generated strategies for negotiation and interlocution with the State, becoming political subjects with collective rights.

The System has demonstrated dynamic capacities to build its own process. It continues to reinvent itself thanks to the experiences, technical and political support from different allies. These include producer organisations, progressive Catholic Church, NGOs and academics committed to social causes. It is important to point out that in this particular case, they managed to move beyond the demands of ethnic groups to obtain support from different social sectors and classes. Therefore, as they struggle for public goods -i.e. security and access to justice without ethnic, religious party or class distinction- the possibilities for alliances and support broaden. Members of the System knew how to take advantage of the organisational experiences of their allies in order to improve the quality of their own working methods in their communities and to generate a wider repertoire of collective actions.

The System is an active member of a network of civil organisations in Guerrero, which developed the State Agenda for the Development and Autonomy of the Indigenous Peoples of Guerrero in 2005. This alliance has allowed for continuous internal strengthening and exchange of methodologies and practises with other local organisations (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2005). Moreover, in cases of harassment or repression by the government authorities, they have efficiently mobilised national and international support. Likewise, the System has established other strategic alliances with the CNI and the Otra Campaña of the EZLN and has expressed solidarity with different local organisational processes.

Finally, this case study shows that the System has known how to take advantage of the opportunities offered by national and international legislation regarding indigenous rights to bolster their demands, actions and projects. Similarly, it has taken advantage of new political spaces and resources stemming from the gradual political opening and decentralisation in the country, which has allowed for an improved interlocution with different levels of government, particularly at the municipal level.

The Community Police and the System have been favoured by all those factors, which have strengthen themselves and have also generated a persistent challenge to the neo-liberal model of the Mexican State.

The Main Internal and External Challenges

Internal Challenges

As previously noted, the Community Police and the System are not exempt from crises. The high levels of marginalisation and poverty in the region are generating an exodus of young members of the participating communities. This trend is detrimental to the social fabric of the community, especially to the solidarity and shared responsibility of the members of the community in public matters. Youngsters are particularly affected by this situation: They are not getting actively involved in assemblies, and they do not want to engage in community work or services -including working for the Community Police. When they are forced to carry out community service, they normally lack the mysticism and understanding of the process characteristic of elder people.[255] This behaviour can have a direct impact on the process of renovation and efficiency in the long term. In this sense, during the participative observation (2004 -2005) the lack of youngsters in the assemblies and in the different workshops was evident.

Another important challenge is achieving the full participation of women in the System mainly in the process of decision-making, where it is still very low. So far, there have not been effective mechanisms for their integration. The functions of women are still concentrated in indirect or low profile activities such as the preparation of food for events and assemblies and involvement in cases of justice where there are other women involved. Felícitas Martínez, an active social leader and member of the System argues: "there are still traditions and customs in the communities that discourage the participation of women in community assemblies and in the System. If women do not attend or participate in the assemblies, then they do not vote and they do not make decisions".[256]

[255] Interview with Pantaleón Reyes Rosario, municipal commissioner of Zoyatlán in Marquelia, and Mardonio Liberio García, commander of Miahuichán, conducted on the 14th of February 2005.
[256] Informal interview with Felícitas Martínez, CRAC advisor in Oaxtepec-México, 20th of October 2006. Felícitas is a clear exception in the System because she has been one of the leading advocates of female participation.

A further challenge is the sustainable generation of resources to cover the operational expenses of the System. It has been previously noted that many of the resources were acquired in a discretional fashion and from friendly municipal authorities. Although the participating communities provide the System with most of its resources, the high levels of poverty and marginalisation make it difficult to sustain this method of support. The members of the System have sought ways to generate resources. For example, they created a civil association in order to be able to receive funding from public and private bodies or demand permanent economic support from the municipalities; all of this with the objective of maintaining independence from political parties and the governmental apparatus (Sipaz 2005:5). However, the ambiguous relationship with the government, particularly when it manipulates the notion of its illegality, complicates the independent generation and reception of resources.[257] Therefore, as anthropologist Teresa Sierra suggests, the problem is not that the government prohibits the receipt of resources but that these are conditionally given, and outside the control of the community authorities as has already happened with similar processes elsewhere (Sierra 2006:16).

Similarly, the permanent training of members of the System is also a challenge, primarily in the case of new members who need to learn about internal rules and other topics related to human rights, indigenous rights, weapons training and first aid. For these reasons, the CRAC´s members consider it important to create new structures that guarantee the identity of the community organisation members and generate an efficient system of training in those areas because "the lack of a permanent training program has caused problems related

[257] Despite its "illegality", the System has had support for special projects from the INI -now CND-, federal semi-autonomous agency, as published during the general assembly of the 20th of February 2005 and in an interview with Valentín Hernández, San Luis Acatlán, 19th of February 2005.

to the violation of the human rights of detainees, which has been frequently used by state authorities as an argument against the System" (CRAC 2007).

The System faces the challenge of protecting its members who have suffered adverse effects for their participation in the community System. In this sense, Community Police officers do not have any kind of life or health insurance, and so far, five of them have died in the line of duty. Many members of the System have fled the region due to threats from caciques or governmental agents who have seen their interests affected.[258]

The Community Police and the System have seriously affected local interests that were previously untouchable in the region, especially those of caciques, by reducing their informal and/or illegal activities and their impunity. Therefore, "community action has been especially negative for the local elites because they know that if they committed any kind of crime, they will be punished and re-educated".[259] The System has generated powerful enemies who reject its functions and presence. This is clearly reflected in an energetic statement of a local cattle rancher who, during an interview, suggested: "the Community Police should go to the mountains and villages and apply justice there".[260]

In an evaluation meeting in Pueblo Hidalgo, in February 2007, members of the System recognised the absence of a strategic plan that allowed for further immediate actions and to avoid permanent dependency on the government's agenda and shifts in the political landscape. They insist on the necessity of building their own political project,

[258] Interview with Isela Rodríguez, CRAC secretary, San Luis Acatlán, 22nd January 2005.
[259] Informal interview with Gustavo Carrión, Catholic Priest, San Luis Acatlán, 15th February 2005.
[260] Interview with a research participant on condition of anonymity because of fear of retaliation. It was suggested that "Community Police also imposes hard labour on those that are considered defamatory".

independently of the action of the State authorities or political parties in power (CRAC 2007).

External Challenges

Amongst the most important external challenges faced by the System are the growing militarisation, drug trafficking and the presence of armed groups in the region. All these phenomena are intimately linked and represent the most serious challenge to the System. Regarding the negative impact of the production, trafficking and use of drugs in the region, the biggest problem lies in the economic and political power of the private actors who generate a climate of violence, intimidation and corruption, which makes the work of the System and its members considerably more difficult. Likewise, this justifies the presence of the army and other forces of the State, which affect the normal development of life and the dynamics of the indigenous communities. In the interviews carried out in the municipal police station it was evident that the number of cases related to drug trafficking is growing rapidly and becoming an increasingly complicated problem due to the presence of high-powered weapons, but especially due to other problems caused by this phenomenon such as addiction to drugs, corruption, intimidation and more violence.[261]

In different interviews, the presence of both political parties and different Christian churches is encouraging a high level of fragmentation amongst members of indigenous

[261] Interviews with Alfredo Mesa, municipal commissioner of Miahuichán, San Luis Acatlán, 16th February 2005; Nicolás de la Cruz Manzano, member of the Community Police station of Cuanacaxtitlan, San Luis Acatlán, 17th February 2005 and Pantaleón Reyes Rosario, municipal commissioner of the committee of Zoyatlán in Marquelia, 14th February 2005.

communities, which had already started to affect or influence internal dynamics and community processes especially during elections and religious celebrations.[262]

Finally, in different community assemblies the participating members of the System have come to the conclusion that the defence of their territory has become one of the key challenges of their struggle because their ownership and collective defence will depend upon the existence of the System and its processes (CRAC 2007). This is particularly relevant at a time when there are perceived threats against their property, lands and resources from private agents that are external to the communities.[263]

Conclusions

The Community Police and its System of Security, Justice and Re-education is an example of a successful indigenous peoples articulation that significantly challenge the neoliberal State project because it has created an alternative project, which wants an independent interaction with state authorities, contests the current reformulation of the State and actively aspires to participate in the public policies that affect them. It has consolidated its initiative though the reinvention of itself, through: the recovering of some of their traditional practices, the combination of formal procedures with normative systems, the re-thinking and re-making of their former methods and organisational structures, the broadering of multi-etnic and multi-class alliances and the generation of tangible results to their members.

[262] Some churches do not recognise, even prohibit, certain community services or posts that are closely linked to the traditions of the Catholic Church.

[263] Formal conversation with Miguel Ángel Mijangos, member of PAIR, A.C. organisation that belongs to the Costa Chica-La Mountaña Network, 27th August 2004. On the 18th of April 2006, at the meeting between members of the System and Subcomandante Marcos and the representatives of *La Otra Campaña*, there were recurrent reports of threats related to the expropriation of lands and the exploitation of resources. Documents from the following electronic source http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/recorrido/guerrero/406/ accessed on 30th of June 2008.

As this case study evidences, there has been a qualitative shift in the way that organised indigenous peoples want to engage and participate in the State formation process, primarily through establishing a new political agenda conducive to the development of a more respectful relationship with State agents and the implementation of genuinely pluricultural public policies and legislations. This is confirmed by the way in which members of the System discuss issues of insecurity and violence in the region that "will not be resolved by 'officially' legalising or re-incorporating the Community Police but changing the way and methodology in which the State applies justice".[264] Therefore, they insist they do not just want legislation designed from above, but they want it to be applied and complied with. As express it the following statement of one of its members: "we not only want that others make the laws for us and implement them, we want to participate and be taken into account".[265]

The Mexican constitution explicitly recognises judicial plurality, and it is therefore obliged to rethink and modify the model and conception of nation so that it is more inclusive and respectful of the existence of cultural and judicial diversity in practice, which has been negated in the past. This way the rule of law could be reinforced and could shift from current politic rhetoric -which has so far characterised the relationship between the State and the indigenous peoples- to become effective and legally binding.

[264] Statement of Cirino Plácencia, CRAC Commissioner in the community assembly of El Carmen, 20th of February 2005.
[265] Statement by Valentín Hernández, legal advisor in the 5th Congress of the Latin American Network of Legal Anthropology; Justice and Diversity in the Globalisation Era, 19th October 2006 in Oaxtepec, México.

The prevailing situation of a lack of legal acknowledgement in practice and the repression of different ways of independent indigenous organisation are causing these communities to build projects at the peripheries of the State, which further weakens the State's capability to act, and diminishes its legitimacy and governance in the medium and long term.

The case of the Community Police and the System illustrates that despite constitutional reforms and a rhetorical discourse on multiculturalism of the neo-liberal regimes, the relation of the State with indigenous people continues to be integrationist because proposals to fully participate or equitably interact are non-existent, and neo-indigenist policies based on conditional assistance and subordinated incorporation, continue.

Additionally, the case shows how indigenous organisations that have gone beyond the permitted limits and have organised themselves around substantial topics and expansive organisational objectives face the harassment and repression of the State. This reflects the lack of willingness and capacity of the governing elites to interact with independent organisations that challenge their authoritarian control.

However, the members of the System recognise the importance of interlocution with the State so that their collective rights are guaranteed and an atmosphere that favours their autonomous development can be generated. Therefore, they have insisted that they do not seek confrontation but harmonisation and coordination. So far, the possibility of a respectful relationship between the System and the State authorities is not certain.

Chapter Eight
The Community Struggle for the Reconstruction of a Self-Governing Identity of the Amuzgo People in Xochistlahuaca (Suljaá)

The case of Xochistlahuca exemplify a struggle for self-governing as a response to the neoliberal reconfiguration of the State. In contrast to the Community Police's case, this one did not take a form of engagement with the State. Actually, it tended to reproduce their traditional authorities and structures confronting the State in some periods, and ostracised itself in others.

This case also illustrates the way in which the governing elites use different control mechanisms to consolidate the Mexican State and to establish relationships with indigenous peoples in isolated regions or in areas that have a low level of integration with the centres of development in the country. In particular, it demonstrates the structures of power and domination that have been altered, albeit slightly, by a fragile social movement and by the fact that the local elites -linked to the PRI- "violently refuse to disappear", despite the process of modernisation and democratisation that the country has experienced over the past thirty years.

In Xochistlahuaca, the relationship between the Amuzgo people and the Mexican State has been primarily characterised by the intermediation of indigenous and mestizo caciques, supported by a broad clientelistic network operating at the state level and by the omission of authoritarian actions by the federal government.

Over time, the PRI local elites have demonstrated great skill in co-opting political opposition and have tolerated the controlled exercise of customary practises of the Amuzgo peoples only if these did not go against their interests and did not exceed the accepted limits.

The history of the Amuzgo peoples in Xochistlahuaca has also been characterised by a long-standing struggle for lands, demands for the recognition of their cultural identity and a conflict over the imposition of authoritarian caciques. However, their struggle has not altered the structures of power and when there have been expressions of social dissatisfaction, the results have been ephemeral because the system is able to gradually recover. This can be explained by the long list of acts of repression and co-option of leaders, which has caused the demobilisation, weakening and fragmentation of local opposition organisations.

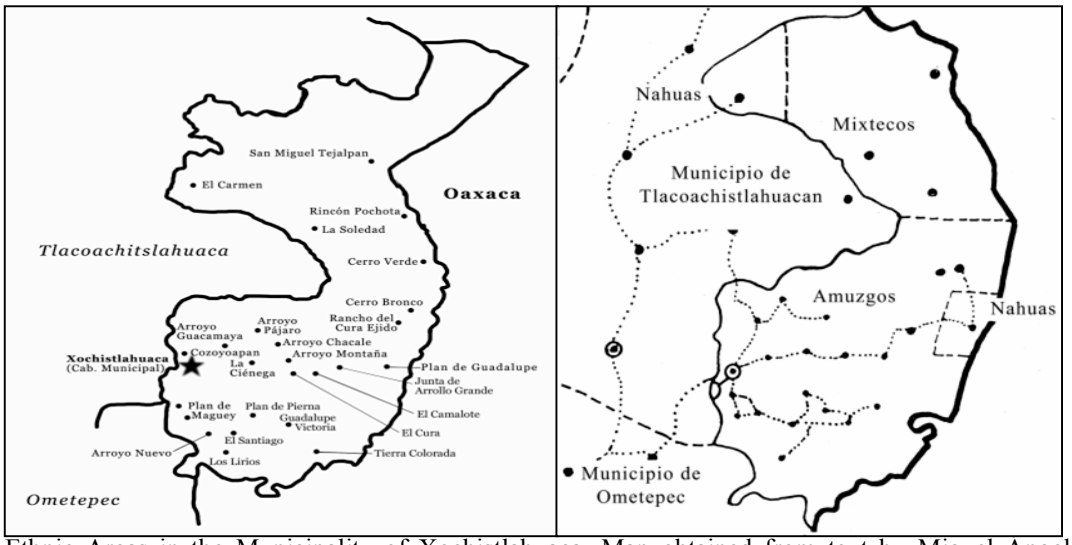
The violence worsened in the 1990s, especially during electoral periods and in conflicts over lands. This was due to the increased presence of different political parties and to the necessity of controlling the local power because of the decentralisation of economic resources and both the liberation and appreciation of the land as a commodity; all of which was driven by national legislation in 1992.

The open use of repression, harassment and the criminalisation of socio-political organisations by the local elites and the lack of effective intervention by the federal government have led to the creation of parallel governments -"traditional" governments- which act at the peripheries of the State and whose positions have become radicalised with

the growing impunity. All this has generated more violence and heightened levels of radicalisation amongst the conflicting parties.

Geographical Conditions of the Municipality and Distribution of the Population

In order to understand the development of the self-governing struggle of the Amuzgo Peoples of Xochistlahuaca, it is necessary to appreciate its geographical context and their relationships with the different government authorities and other local socio-political actors.



Ethnic Areas in the Municipality of Xochistlahuaca. Map obtained from text by Miguel Angel Gutiérrez (2001) *Déspotas y caciques: Una antropología política de los amuzgos en Guerrero*, pp 20 y 45.

The municipality of Xochistlahuaca, as officially designated in Náhuatl, or *Suljaá* according to the Amuzgo language, is located in Costa Chica de Guerrero. As indicated in the map, it is bordered to the North by the municipality of Tlacoachistlahuaca and the state of Oaxaca, and to the South by the municipality of Ometepec. In Xochistlahuaca, there are 22,781 inhabitants, most of which are Amuzgo peoples who represent 93% of the

population.[266] There also exist other communities, such as the Mixtecas and the Nahuas, that cumulatively represent 5% of the population, whilst mestizos constitute 2% (INI 2002).

The municipality of Xochistlahuaca is comprised of 120 comumunities. The main political administrative centres are located in the *cabecera municipal* (seat of the municipal government) with the same name: the Municipal Presidency, the *Comisaria Ejidal* (Agrarian office, responsible for *ejido* matters and the management of natural resources in the community), the Peace Court, the Community Centre, the public library, the Registry Office and the community radio station, amongst other.

For decades, Xochistlahuaca remained geographically isolated from the main administrative and economic centres of the state of Guerrero: "in the 1940s and 1950s, there was no path, no road and certainly no motorised transportation that enabled the cabecera to communicate with the communities that make up the municipality or with the neighbouring commercial ladino[267] population of Ometepec" (Jordá H. 2003:140). There are testimonies from "people travelling by donkey or by foot to Ometepec, taking seven to eight hours at regular pace",[268] suggesting the short distance between the communities was long and arduous for the population due to the lack of effective means of transportation (Valdez 1998:23). This situation was further exacerbated during the rainy season when the mudslides effectively sentenced people to a state of isolation.

[266] The Amuzgo population in Mexico is concentrated across 24 communities in the municipality of Xochistlahuaca, Tlacoachistlahuaca and Ometepec in the state of Guerrero and, to a lesser extent, in the municipality of San Pedro Amuzgo in the state of Oaxaca (Valdez 1998:17). The artificial division of the Amuzgos was a result of the definition of the state border in Guerrero in 1849.
[267] Term used by some indigenous people to refer to mestizo or white people.
[268] Interview with Jani Jordá Hernández, bilingual teacher, Xochistlahuaca, 2nd of February 2005.

It was not until the 1970s that the first path between Xochistlahuaca and Ometepec was opened (Jordá H. 2003:132), and only in 1998 the first paved road of 36 km in length was constructed connecting both places (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2005:100). These factors together with the fact that the community primarily spoke Amuzgo hindered the complete integration of the municipality and its population into state and national economic dynamics, which benefited the intermediation of commercial and political caciques.[269]

Socio-Economic Characteristics

The levels of marginalisation in the municipality of Xochistlahuaca are high. Official statistics demonstrate that 64.7% of the population over the age of 15 are illiterate; 80.3% of the houses do not have sanitation system and 50% lack electricity, whilst 97.4% do not have access to public health services (INI 2002).

The majority of the Amuzgo population live on subsistence agriculture, growing maize, tomatoes, beans, pumpkin, chilli and other basic products to feed themselves.[270] A small sector produces sugar cane, peanuts, sesame and some fruits for the market. However, production is insufficient for the maintenance of families, something exacerbated by the fact that the use of most of the lands is only seasonal while other areas are untillable.[271] Additionally, due to the increasing number of families without land, many peasants have

[269] According to official statistics, 70.4 % of the population is monolingual and 29.6 % is bilingual (INI 2002).
[270] In the year 2000, according to statistics from the INEGI, 44% of the economically active population of the municipality worked on activities of the primary sector, 42% worked on the secondary sector, 12% worked on the third sector and 2% in other sectors (INEGI 2004).
[271] In a study carried out in the 1980s, 19% of the land in the state of Guerrero was tillable; 27% of the total concentrated in the Costa Chica. Ríos Morales, M. (1983) Régimen capitalista e indígena en La Montaña de Guerrero, Chilpancingo, Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, quoted in Valdez 1998:19.

been forced to seek jobs outside of the *ejido, particularly* in the urban cities (Valdez 1998:36).

Due to this, families in Xochistlahuaca have tried to diversify their economic strategies to compliment their income, primarily through non-agricultural activities such as construction, carpentry and fireworks. Different members of the family increasingly engage in commercial activities. Women, for example, in addition to contributing to the income of the family through domestic work, animal husbandry and agriculture, have been increasingly involved in the production of *huipiles* and other knitwear (Valdez 1998:36-9). Nonetheless, there is a limited market for the sale of their products, and intermediaries prevent them from getting a fair price for their products (MCP 2005:3).

Despite these efforts, migration has become one of the principle alternatives to compliment the family income. The low profitability of local agriculture has forced many youngsters to migrate to Sinaloa and Sonora to pick tomatoes (Rodríguez W. 2001:430). There is grave concern amongst adults in the communities because "their children have to migrate and they are losing their traditions".[272] The lack of opportunities in the community has caused youngsters to reject their indigenous identity and to refrain from participating in community tasks".[273]

[272] Interview with Delfuedo de la Cruz García, bilingual teacher and promoter of the PRD, Rancho del Cura, 1st of February 2005.
[273] Interview with Artemio Bautista, farmer, Cozoyoapan, 6th of February 2005, and participation in the meeting to promote the vote in the community of Rancho del Cura, 2nd of February 2005.

The Relationship between Ethnic Groups in the Municipality

The Amuzgo people define themselves as an ethnic community that has maintained deep-rooted cultural characteristics: their language, their costumes, civil and religious rites, their vision of the world and their geographical location. However, as social anthropologist, Norberto Valdez has recorded in his study of ethnicity and class in Xochistlahuaca, "the fact that individuals and communities share ethnic elements does not necessarily imply ethnic solidarity in times of tension or conflict" (Valdez 1998:4-7). This would explain why there are marked divisions between the Amuzgo people –based on a combination of economic, political, generational and even gender factors-, which have evolved over time and have deepened or have been deliberately manipulated during political-electoral turning points causing violence and deep divisions.

In spite of being a minority, mestizos play a dominant role in the political and economic structure of the municipality. After the Mexican revolution, mestizos from Ometepec or San Luis Acatlán established themselves in the cabecera of Xochistlahuaca to promote trade, cattle farming and internal transportation. Their incorporation into the socio-economic life of indigenous communities was reinforced by the system of "*compadrazgos"* (cronyism) and their participation in local ceremonies and rituals (Valdez 1998:77). Additionally, during the post revolutionary period and the Agrarian Reform, they were given lands and rights over *ejidos* (Jacobs 1982; Valdez 1998:42).

Economically, mestizos control trade and transportation. As they dominate local shops and the system of distribution, they can control the production of small producers in the region. The latter depend on them to take their produce to market and are vulnerable to fluctuations

in price and to the whim of capricious owners of the transportation system (Valdez 1998:44-5) many of whom have become loan-sharks, taking advantage of their unique financial position (Valdez 1998:154; Jordá H. 2003:130-2).

Politically, mestizos have had few formal official posts within the indigenous municipality; however, their influence is evident because they hold key posts. They have been able to rise to such positions because they are able to read and write and can speak both Spanish and Amuzgo, thus they have become indispensable in administrative interactions with government agencies (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:111). This function has allowed them to establish a relationship with, and benefit from, the governmental corporate system. Furthermore, the mestizo local elites and the PRI agents have promoted indigenous leaders or caciques because some members of the communities support them, arguing that "they protect and defend our traditions and the cultural integrity of the Amuzgo people against rich mestizos who are alien to our community".[274]

The Historical Struggle for Land and Community Life

Nobody has shown us any documents, plans or census.
Consequently, we have not had any means to defend our lands.
In the agrarian offices, they only listen to rich people and to our enemies.

Fidencio Gómez, Letter sent to the leader of the DAAC, 1967[275]

Historically, the Amuzgo communities have been immersed in a constant struggle to maintain their communal lands, which are the source of their livelihoods, their identity and

[274] Anonymous interview conducted by Norberto Valdez in Xochistlahuaca in 1985 (Valdez 1998:44).
[275] Departamento de Asuntos Agrarios y Colonización, exp. 37775 AGN, quoted in Valdez 1998:112.

their community organisation (Valdez 1998:3). It has been precisely the conflict for lands that has led them to a permanent state of violence (Valdez 1998:126).

After the Mexican Independence in 1821, some Amuzgo communities managed to retain part of their communal lands. But later on, most of the population lost their land because of the expansion of large scale Haciendas. This new agrarian structure was consolidated by the liberal *Leyes Desamotización* (1856), which allowed national and international (particularly American) companies to appropriate large swathes of communal lands belonging to indigenous peoples. Therefore, the Amuzgo people became either the workforce or smallholders.[276] In Xochistlahuaca and the neighbouring municipalities, Guillermo Acho's hacienda accumulated more that 15,000 hectares, which in 1890 were bought by Lewis Lamm, who maintained a system of exploitation labelled "absence ownership" in which the administration of the lands was carried out by foremen. This system of accumulation of rents and tributes for the use of lands allowed indigenous groups a degree of autonomy in their organisational methods and decisions concerning production (Valdez 1998:57-87).

During the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), some Amuzgo peoples exceeded the ethnic and class boundaries, forming an alliance with small scale landowners or rancheros of mestizo[277] extraction in order to fight for lands against the large scale *hacendados* and the *Porfirista* dictatorship (Guardino 1996).

[276] The Houston based McCabe Oil Company accumulated 100,000 hectares, while the Compañía Comercializadora de Guerrero received 200,000 hectares, both in the costal plains and in La Montaña (Figueroa Uriza 1960:89 in Valdez 2001:69).
[277] The ranchers were primarily mestizo, small *hacendados* and literate (Jacobs 1982).

The rancheros formed a common front and became the most powerful political force of the regional agrarian movement in the struggle for their revolutionary demands. This way, during the post revolutionary phase, Anti-porfirista rancheros became the new leaders of the indigenous groups, driving their struggle for agrarian reform in exchange for the receipt of lands and public posts (Valdez 1998:71). Gradually, the rancheros increased their local power through alliances with the revolutionary family of the PRI (Jacobs 1982:24), which is why the political history of the *cacicazgo* in Xochistlahuaca goes back to the origin of the party (1929).[278]

However, after the Revolution, the rancheros lost interest in returning the land to their former allies amongst the indigenous peoples. In this context, the first allocation of land requested in 1929, which was authorised in 1933, included many mestizos but not all of the indigenous applicants.[279] The discontent and uncertainty caused tension and divided the Amuzgos from the mestizos; the latter were accused of manipulating the law for their personal gain concerning the allocation of lands and giving the poor quality lands to the indigenous peoples.[280]

It is important to remember that during the post-revolutionary governments, two key factors caused the control and subordination of the Amuzgo peoples to the dominating power structure. Firstly, the redistribution of lands in the form of *ejidos*, which became a means of

[278] At the state level, the revolutionary family was led by Figueroa de Huitzuco, in the North of Guerrero. In Costa Chica, the revolutionary leader was Enrique Añorve, who had significant influence in Ometepec and recruited peasants and indigenous peoples for the revolutionary struggle with the promise of giving them back their communal lands, which they had lost due to the *Leyes de Desamortización*, most of which were sold and brought by creoles and mestizos (Jacobs 1982:88).

[279] This was officially allocated in 1955. However, it was not until 1967 when the definitive legal allocation was made (copies of the documents are in the researcher's archive).

[280] There was great resistance from *hacendados* to the implementation of the land reform. Many of them divided their properties into small plots in order to give them to their family members, thus evading the agents of reform (Valdez 1998:92-9).

social and political manipulation by the corporatist State (Warman 1973; Jacobs 1982; Otero 1999). In this sense, the *ejido* system was a mechanism that generated a high level of dependency toward the State and its intermediary agencies such as the CNC and local PRI leaders. Secondly, the political regime allowed for a limited and highly regulated level of autonomy of indigenous customary mechanisms for the election of traditional authorities which were kept under the control of local PRI caciques (Sieder 2002:191). Municipal presidents, municipal commissioners and *ejido* commissioners were elected in accordance with the customary system applied by the *principales* in the town assembly and finally registered as candidates for the PRI (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:66; Dehouve and Bey 2006:327).[281] The system would work if the Amuzgo peoples and the representatives did not exceed the limits tolerated by the regime, in other words, if their actions were not considered "too" independent or contrary to the interests of the local elites of the PRI.

Despite the relative post-revolutionary stability, the indigenous demands for their land rights were kept alive. In the 1960s, independent movements emerged encouraged by the importance of converting the *ejidos* into communal lands and acquiring more lands for the still dispossessed indigenous peoples.[282] The Amuzgo leaders did not approve of the land being in the hands of mestizos or being rented out to other indigenous communities. The movement was led by the Regulating Peasant Committee of Xochistlahuaca, CRCX (Comité Regulador Campesino de Xochistlahuaca), formed by Amuzgo land activists who called for the recognition of ethnic rights and titles recognised by the Spanish Crown in

[281] The *principales* carried out different functions in the Amuzgo municipalities: they were representatives before the State and the government authorities, intermediaries in inter and intra community conflicts, and they were in charge of the election of community posts, amongst others (Gutiérrez 2001:92).
[282] In the 1970s, one fifth of the Amuzgo population did not have land in the municipality of Xochistlahuaca (Valdez 1998).

1598, which "could be certified in the National General Archive".[283] Therefore, there was an attempt by the Amuzgo people to recuperate communal lands that they considered legally theirs, recognising the State was the only possible arbitrator in this matter because of their status as "the original" (native) inhabitants. By requesting a change in status, the Amuzgo people intended to extinguish the mestizo peoples' right to land, which had been used, through dubious procedures, to maintain control of significant swathes of land. The request generated fear amongst mestizo rancheros and, faced with the threat of the imminent invasion of "their lands" they decided to arm their "*pistoleros"* in order to protect themselves, a process that caused serious conflict that continued unimpeded by the intervention of the State (Valdez 1998:105-8).

In order to heighten levels of belligerence targeted at the Amuzgo movement, mestizos began to intervene directly in municipal matters. Up until the 1960s, traditional municipal posts had been in the hands of Amuzgo inhabitants. However, in 1962, Rodolfo Domínguez, one of the richest mestizos in the community, was appointed, by force, as municipal president. This appointment enabled mestizos to gather more lands and hindered the endeavours of the CRCX to achieve a change in status (Valdez 1998:110).

This measure radicalised the position of the members of the CRCX. One of the people in charge of the municipality was murdered and conflicts over lands continued to trigger violence, insecurity and division, all of which contributed to worsening the reputation of the region as a violent zone in popular myths and songs (Valdez 1998:119-128; McDowell 2000).

[283] Copies of the documents are in the researcher's archive.

Towards the end of the 1960s, the Federal Government recruited several promoters of bilingual education to broaden its presence in remote areas where its ability to exercise power had been weak in the past (Bey 2006:253). Therefore, some indigenous leaders were residentially schooled by the State and subsequently returned to their communities as political intermediaries between the people and the federal government (Hernández C. 2006). Over time, these bilingual teachers became the "new indigenous literate elite"[284] (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:327; Dehouve and Bey 2006:322), who questioned and challenged the role the *principales* and local caciques had played so far.

In Xochistlahuaca, this new indigenous elite began to occupy public posts in the municipality, accumulating a certain economic power and establishing relationships with local caciques and mestizos from Ometepec. Consequently, they began to build a clientelistic network, which allowed them to take power from the traditional mestizo caciques. This was the case with Amuzgo bilingual teacher Josefina Flores García, a supporter of a new political stream of the PRI, who with the consent of high ranking leaders of the party disputed the political power of cattle farmer and cacique Rufino Añorve, who previously exerted absolute control over the main economic and political decision making in the municipality (Gutiérrez Á. 2006:327).

In 1978, the appointment -supported from above and outside- of indigenous leader Josefina Flores by the governor of the state, Rubén Figueroa Figueroa, was a political turning point in Xochistlahuaca, and represented the destruction of the alliance that had long selected "candidates from the people". Therefore, her appointment was contrary to the traditional

[284] The new indigenous leaders became a privileged elite because they received a permanent salary from the government as bilingual promoters, and due to their literacy, they became local leaders or political advisors (Gutiérrez 2006:327).

form of election: conducted through the *principales,* the Amuzgo Supreme Council[285] and with the support of the traditional caciques (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:67). Josefina Flores, then twenty years old, ascended to the post of municipal president arguing that: "she was coming to engender a break with the deeply rooted traditions which dictated that this kind of post was only for men […] and older people" (Gutiérrez Á., Tapia *et al*. 2006:328).

The new municipal president imposed her authority through serious abuses of power, open repression and despotism. Consequently, different social and political sectors, even members of the PRI, united in opposition to her. Representatives of the different Amuzgo communities presented themselves to the federal and state authorities on several occasions to denounce the abuses and violation of their rights. However, they did not receive a response, as hundreds of petitions of governmental intervention in the archive of the *ejido* commission of Xochistlahuaca demonstrate.[286]

In 1979, due to the lack of response by different State agencies, important civilian actions were conducted in protest at the despotic and violent power exerted by the municipal president with the support of the police and the army (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:17; Gutiérrez Á. 2006:80). The indigenous communities launched several different protests demanding their rights as citizens which ended with hunger strikes and 'sit-ins' in front of the governor's offices in Chilpancingo. Such protests were effectively influenced by a group of socio-

[285] The indigenous supreme councils were supported by the INI under Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) all across the country to offer a representative to each one of the ethnic groups within the State. In the case of the Amuzgo people, the council was formed by delegates (*principales*) elected in the municipalities where they had influence: Xochistlahuaca, Tlacoachistlahuaca and Ometepec (Gutiérrez 2001:63).

[286] The researcher has copies of the letters addressed to the President of the Republic and other State authorities asking for their intervention to stop the abuses of the municipal president.

political *brigadistas* or *orientadores* (brigades or counsellors),[287] formed by approximately 20 bilingual teachers with links to a political-ideological group that identified itself as the "*línea de masas"* (mass line).[288] During the 1970s and 1980s, this group had sought to promote a struggle with a peasant/Marxist profile rather than ethnic claims (Gutiérrez Á., Tapia *et al.* 2006:388). One of the most important activities undertaken by this group was the organisation of a march to demand the removal of the municipal president in November 1979. In mid January 1980, in conjunction with different Amuzgo sectors and the Amuzgo Supreme Council, it organised community assemblies to discuss the local situation, which ended with the decision to siege the municipal palace of Xochistlahuaca.[289]

The municipal president accused the organisers of being extremists and communists, and once again resorted to the use of force in an effort to repress them, including the use of the motorised police and the bolstering of the military presence in order to spread fear (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:71). Due to the disorder this situation generated, the governor of the state, Rubén Figueroa Figueroa, decided to act directly to prevent the municipal president being removed from her post because he felt that any change in the municipal authorities arising from an independent indigenous movement would be considered disrespectful to his authority. Figueroa went to the municipal presidency, which had previously been stormed by indigenous groups, and stated: "I wasn't given birth by fear […] she [the president] will stay where she is until she completes her term in office, and if I want, I will appoint her for

[287] The *orientadores* considered their function as being to guide peasants in their organisation for a long term struggle through a gradual and permanent process of ideological-political convincing. Some of them were students of the college of Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero and others worked as technicians for the INI in Ometepec (Gutiérrez 2001:72, García 2000).
[288] Inspired by the Chinese Cultural Revolution.
[289] Previously, the group had carried out an exercise of preparedness for action by asking for an independent secondary school, which they finally gained. Thus, their organised social struggle in the municipality was strengthened. Conversation with Carlos García, President of the PADs, Uppsala, October 2007.

another three years".[290] The intimidating presence of the governor and his threats of repression managed to disperse the rebellion. Indigenous leaders, bilingual teachers and *orientadores* did not know how to deal with this situation. Some of them were threatened, others were dispatched to other areas and others still were co-opted by leaders of the PRI and agents of the Ministry of Interior (*Secretaría de Gobernación*) (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:76-9).

As a consequence of the 'solution' to the municipal crisis, the functions of the *principales* and the Amuzgo Supreme Council were weakened. They had already been highly questioned by indigenous youngsters who had studied abroad, bilingual teachers, members of opposition parties and, to a lesser extent, by representatives of different churches,[291] who were highly critical of the traditional mechanism for the decision making process in the community. They especially rejected the structures for the selection of representatives, which stymied the political participation of the next generation, who had not acquired sufficient experience in the various community posts and services to rise through the ranks (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:63; Dehouve and Bey 2006:320).

In the 1980s, the federal government supported an electoral law to confront the severe electoral crisis of the Mexican political system that was expressed in the indifference of the citizens and the lack of credibility of political parties (Dehouve 2006:217). In 1988, the opening of the political system triggered the first attempt at organisation outside of the

[290] Quote reproduced from interviews with the *orientadores* conducted by Miguel Á. Gutiérrez (Gutiérrez 2001:78).
[291] The increasing presence of Christian churches in the region make their members challenge some rights and services traditionally related to the Catholic religion. This is the case of the *mayordomía*, a post created for the organisation of community religious celebrations.

official magisterial sector in Xochistlahuaca.[292] A group of bilingual teachers linked to a group of *orientadores*, such as Bartolomé López Guzmán and Genáro Cruz, used a newsletter to publicise their intention to organise themselves independently of the official union, stressing their ethnicity and the importance of promoting the Amuzgo language. The two subsequent newsletters acquired a potent anti-mestizo tone and warned people of the danger of becoming "people of reason"[293] reminding them that they were an "indian" political organisation (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:51-2).

Regarding the opening of the electoral system, it is important to remember that in Xochistlahuaca, the PRI was the only relevant political party, so the peoples' candidate was always effectively elected under its banner (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:101-3). This is why, for many decades, incidence of what Daniéle Dehouve termed "election without option" took place because political parties exhibiting genuine opposition were not allowed. The only political institutions that could run an electoral campaign without being recognised as "subversive" were the *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN),[294] the *Partido Popular Socialista* (PPS) and the *Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana* (PARM) (Dehouve 2006:213). However, none of them presented a real challenge to the hegemonic power of the PRI until 1988 when the *Frente Democrático Nacional* (FDN), the predecessor of the PRD emerged in the region.

[292] The National Union of Educational Workers, SNTE (El Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación) is the official body of the corporatist Mexican system, and it is the most powerful in Latin America.
[293] This is a term used by the Spanish Conquistadores to separate themselves from indigenous peoples whom they consider people of customs.
[294] The PAN has not represented a significant political force in Guerrero. Until the 1990s it maintained only 4% of the votes although recently its presence has slightly increased without surpassing the 10% of the electoral mark (Dehouve 20006:218). The PPS and the PARM have not represented a real challenge to the power of the PRI and have been considered more as an "appendix" of it (Meyer 1995).

In the municipal elections of 1989, there was a cross party struggle that was unprecedented in the history of Xochistlahuaca because of the high levels of participation and the possibility of a victory for the opposition party. The conditions were enhanced by a profound division within the PRI. However, despite the reports of electoral fraud and a siege of the municipal palace by the opposition, cattle rancher Rufino Añorve -a traditional cacique- was appointed to the municipal presidency by the government of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu for the period 1989 to 1993 (Gutiérrez Á., Tapia *et al*. 2006:332).

It is important to highlight that the most intense struggle for municipal presidencies, both inside the PRI and against opposition parties, is linked to the process of decentralisation of major economic resources and material from the federal government to the state and its municipalities, which turned them into attractive economic and political loots.[295] Previously, there was only a limited stipend provided for municipal posts (Dehouve and Bey 2006), and "nobody wanted to take on the role of municipal president, now everybody wants to" (Gutiérrez Á., Tapia *et al.* 2006:397).[296]

Consequently, electoral contests became more competitive and violent and the actions of the municipal authorities towards the opposition, more authoritarian and despotic. Due to the situation of ungovernability and violence, in 1997 the *principales* –with the support of various social sectors from Xochistlahuaca– appointed Genáro Cruz as "the people's

[295] For example, in 1998, the Fondos de Aportaciones Federales also known as Ramo 33, was created as a system to transfer direct resources to the municipalities, primarily with regards to education health and institutional strengthening (Bárcenas, C. y Monroy, R 2005).

[296] Carlos Rodríguez, a specialist in municipal development, argues that the struggle for the Commissioner's Office is also reinforced because the appointed individuals become representative of the Committee for Community Social Development of the Programme of Solidarity fostered by Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), which brings some resources to the communities. This new element worsened conflicts over community spaces, and new attempts by the PRI, together with the Municipal presidents, to reinforce its control over the communities, directly appointing municipal commissioners, which further paralysed the political struggle in the localities (Rodríguez W. 2001:438).

candidate" in a community assembly. However, as the electoral legislation of Guerrero demands candidates are appointed through political parties, they asked the PRD and the PT to register him under their banner. Nevertheless, party conflicts and divisions led this alliance to failure, and the PRI candidate once again won the municipal elections.[297]

A second turning point in the history of the violence in Xochistlahuaca was marked by the election of Aceadeth Rocha as municipal president for the PRI in 1999.[298] From the beginning of her tenure, the new president -like Josefina Flores- aggressively repressed her political opponents (de la Riva and Moreno 2004). Rocha endeavoured to consolidate both her family's and her personal power in the region through the intervention in community affairs that, until then, remained relatively self-governed from the municipal authorities and political parties.

In 2001, she refused to acknowledge the commissioners of five communities who had been elected through traditional assemblies in the communities, instead appointing people close to her political group (de la Riva and Moreno 2004).[299] To the same ends, she tried to change the length of the period of the commissioners' tenure from one to three years, as well as the method through which they were elected, further proposing the creation of lists

[297] Conversation with Genáro Cruz, *ejido* commissioner, Xochistlahuaca, 31st January 2005.
[298] Popularly known as *Chade*, bilingual teacher and active member of the PRI, she was a municipal delegate, regional coordinator, district coordinator and acting deputy for the party. She represented indigenous peoples as the President of the Legislative Commission of Indigenous Affairs of the Congress of the State of Guerrero (Comisión Legislativa de Asuntos Indígenas del Congreso del Estado de Guerrero). Thus, *Chade* has advanced in the party by making alliances. Her power is based on a network of relationships with high-powered personalities of the state and federal PRI politics (Gutiérrez 2001:148).
[299] From December 2000, the Municipal president changed the municipal commissioners in Cozoyoapan and municipal delegates in Arroyo Pájaro, Arroyo Grande, Colonia Renacimiento and Arroyo Guacamaya because they were elected by customary processes or because they were supporters of the PRD (Gutiérrez 2001:143 and MCP 2005).

of political parties and voting in the ballot box.[300] She also intervened in matters of local education, appointing supervisors that supported her interests and who, in many cases, were accused of embezzlement, particularly with reference to buying and selling teaching posts (Gutiérrez Á., Tapia *et al*. 2006:356).[301]

Due to this situation and a widespread disillusionment with political parties in general, in 1999 a group of Amuzgo intellectuals called Alianza Plural (Plural Alliance) was formed. Its objective was to integrate the different ethnic groups in the municipality through cultural and educational projects and to organised joint activities fostering the governance of the municipality. Later on, the Civic Indigenous Front of Xochistlahuaca (Frente Cívico Indígena de Xochistlahuaca) was created by the *principales*, progressive members of the political parties -including PRI dissidents-,[302] educators, transporters,[303] indigenous organisations and the Council of the Amuzgo Nation in order to force Aceadeth Rocha to resign. There were intense protests, mobilisations, a siege of the municipal palace, road blocks and even the appointment of parallel authorities (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:143).

Aceadeth Rocha and the municipal leaders of the PRI responded with direct violence against the protestors. As a result, there were several injured, some seriously, without any intervention by the state or federal governments. The cases were taken to the district attorney but most of them remained unpunished (de la Riva and Moreno 2004). The most

[300] In fact, that form was already instituted at the state level according to recent modifications of the Organic Law of the Free Municipality (Ley Orgánica del Municipio Libre). However, in Xochistlahuaca they were not applied because of respect to the customary forms of elections (conversation with Carlos García, President of PADs, Uppsala, 9th of October 2007).

[301] This information was confirmed in an interview with Jani Jordán Hernández, a bilingual teacher and member of the collective of the community radio, Xochistlahuaca, 2nd of February 2005.

[302] The members of the PRI that participated in the FCIX have reported the imposition of external candidates poorly linked to the municipality.

[303] The taxi drivers were led by Josefina Flores from the "other" trend of the PRI. Flores still has a broad clientelistic network and considerable control over transportation and trade (Gutiérrez 2001:137).

serious incident took place on the 9th of January 2001 when José Luis Rocha Ramírez, municipal leader of the PRI and brother of the municipal president, led the violent expulsion of those conducting the siege of the municipal palace. This left many with life threatening injuries including one protestor who lost an eye (Sujaá 2003).[304]

The massive protests and violent incidents were so dire that the state Congress was compelled to intervene in order to request the deposition of the municipal president, "urging the city hall of Xochistlahuaca to apply the traditions and customs of the indigenous communities of the municipalities according to the rights and legal obligations concerning the appointment and election of their community authorities" (Gutiérrez Á., Tapia et al. 2006:356).

The Alianza Plural and the FCIX only had a short life span as an initiative of local opposition. Once the municipal president was deposed, an electoral process for the appointment of the interim leader was initiated and the FCIX was fragmented and dwindled in support because the political groups that formed it reintegrated themselves with their respective political parties or civil organisations. Moreover, its previous allies started playing an antagonistic role in the struggle for local power. Then on the 6th of October 2002, the PRI once again won the municipal elections using its clientelistic networks, buying votes and dividing the opposition (MCP 2005 and Gutiérrez 2006:342 and 376). All of this weakened the movement and its leaders.

[304] Press release of the traditional government of Suljaá, May 2003. Copies of the documents are in the researcher's archive.

The Creation of the Traditional Government of Suljaá

As a result of the State persistently failing to respond to abuse, the ongoing violent impunity of local authorities and the opportunistic attitude of the political parties, some of the Amuzgo organisations once again decided to act independently. Hence, on the 20th of November 2002, they called an assembly of community authorities and social organisations and voted in their own strategy of struggle, which was carried out in parallel with the action of the municipal authorities. They became a Traditional Authorities ruled by their own system based on their traditions and customs. The main objective of this new attempt at organisation was to break free from political parties in the processes of election of their community and municipal authorities. Although its members knew that there was no legislation in Guerrero to guarantee their organisational and electoral practices as indigenous peoples, they also "knew that their system of government was recognised by the Accords of San Andres and by Convention 169 of the ILO, which the Mexican State was a signatory to".[305]

One of the first tasks of the new Traditional Authorities was taking over the municipal palace and other public buildings and appointing an assembly of seven new traditional leaders or *principales*, which were essential to self governance, the resolution of internal problems and the initiation of their development as indigenous peoples (Suljaá 2004).[306]

[305] Interview with David Valtierra, auxiliary of the *principales* and coordinator of the community radio, Xochistlahuaca, 18th of August 2004.
[306] At the beginning of the process, the traditional authorities used of their normative system to solve local and domestic conflicts, and together with the *ejido* commissioner, resolved land issues, such as trespasses, evictions and damages. Conversation with Genáro Cruz, *ejido* commissioner, Xochistlahuaca, 31st January 2005.

The PRI municipal authority responded with a wave of repression directed toward the members of the Traditional Authorities and their principle allies. For example, on the 14th of July 2004, Genáro Cruz, *ejido* commissioner and an active member of the Traditional Government was detained and accused of illegally imprisoning Narciso de Jesús Valtierra (Nistal and Priego 2007:52). However, as Genáro Cruz argued, "Mr. Narciso was taken before the Traditional Authorities and the *principales* to resolve a conflict between him and some members of the community over the illegal occupation of *ejido* lands. There is video footage in which Narciso recognises this and makes a commitment to return the land".[307]

Genáro Cruz was released after the payment of bail and a large demonstration. However, the charges against him remain, and he is required to present himself to sign in at the offices of the Attorney General´s Office in Ometepec. At the same time, eleven arrest warrants were issued against the rest of the traditional leaders who participated in the community assembly in which the conflict between Narciso and the community was resolved (de la Riva and Moreno 2004).

It is difficult to measure the scope of intimidation and repression directed at the supporters of the Traditional Authorities. In August 2004, a preliminary report included two fatalities, twenty serious injuries and at least fifty arrest warrants against the Traditional Authorities and other social activists in Xochistlahuaca (Rojas 2004).

Despite the lack of attention and action by the different levels of the government, the Traditional Authorities have maintained their commitment to dialogue with the government representatives without much success. For example in one incident that took place on the

[307] Informal conversation with Genáro Cruz, *ejido* commissioner, Xochistlahuaca, 31st January 2005.

16th of July 2004, a group went to Ometepec to meet the state authorities. However, according to one of the group "when we arrived at the offices of the regional governmental representative, the despotic officer ignored our previous agreement; he declared he was not going to talk to us and threatened us stating that if we did not leave his office he would report us to the Attorney General's Office" (Suljaá 2004).

The Creation of Radio Ñomndaa "The Word of Water"

We know that justice does not exist for indigenous peoples in the State,
and that we have to organise ourselves by any means
in order to guarantee the exercise of our basic rights…

Communication on radio Ñomndaa "The Word of Water" [308]

Despite the climate of hostility and repression, the Traditional Authorities managed to consolidate some concrete projects, such as the community radio *Ñomndaa* ("the Word of Water"). This was created on the 20th of December 2004 in order to reinforce the identity and organisation of Amuzgo peoples through radio broadcasts, mostly in their own language, as well as "in order to strengthen the Traditional Government, the process of awareness raising, the community fabric, rescuing their local traditions and forms of production" (Suljaá 2004). Their job has been of great significance for the Amuzgo population because they do not have any local newspapers, and the only other radio station available comes from the neighbouring municipality of Ometepec, which has a mestizo programming and audience (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2005).

The community radio station starts and finishes its broadcast with the national anthem sung in Amuzgo and Spanish, and it has decided to provide spaces within the programming

[308] Radio broadcast from Radio Ñomndaa "The Word of Water", 9th of August 2007.

schedule for the legacy of national heroes and symbols. In this way, they highlight the fact that they are both Amuzgo and Mexican people, and at the same time refute the rhetoric and political manipulation of their opponents who claim their process of autonomous organisation is actually the pursuit of a territorial agenda.[309] Additionally, members of the radio's management have insisted that they are not supporters of any political party or religion.

Despite its relatively short existence and the paucity of resources with which it operates, the community radio station has faced the authoritarian structures of the State. The leaders of the self-named "Collective in Rebellion" reported that the federal authorities harassed the station's management because they considered them subversive and a threat to the security of the State (Nistal and Priego 2007:56). In fact, some weeks after its first broadcast, some inspectors from the Minister of Communications and Transportation (SCT) went to the radio studio and intimidated the radio technicians accusing them of being outside of the law and threatening to close the radio station and confiscate the equipment (Sipaz 2008).[310] The governmental officials declared that "people are uncomfortable because the radio is promoting a political campaign, which was refuted by the traditional authorities" (Saavedra L. 2005). Due to this situation, the members of the radio station "objected to the facilities being secured and the broadcast being suspended and documented this objection".[311]

[309] Interview with Petrona de Jesús Nieves, participant of the radio programmes on women issues, and with Jani Jordán, bilingual teacher and member of the community radio collective, Xochistlahuaca, 2nd February 2005.
[310] In Mexico, there are around 40 community radio stations. However, only three of them have "permission from the Federal Administration" for their operation. The community radio of Calenda de Ocotlán (Oaxaca) has official support of the ICHR thus its broadcasting and members are respected (Maerker 2008).
[311] Interview with David Valtierra, coordinator of the community radio, Xochistlahuaca, February 2005.

Members of the radio station have also reported harassment from caciques in the regions that do not approve of their activities. They have pointed out that they have been "indirectly threatened by them" (Saavedra L. 2005), and by unidentified individuals who want to intimidate them (Rojas 2005).[312]

The collective representatives of the community radio have tried to legalise its activity. However, this has been refused by the State authorities who do not want a dialogue with them, and it has also been discouraged by the endless bureaucratic and administrative inertia of the SCT.[313] All of this has been complicated by existing Mexican legislation which decrees the activities of the community radio station are illegal because the airspace is the property of the State and thus a permit is required to broadcast (Nistal and Priego 2007).

Therefore, the Traditional Authorities and members of the radio station decided to continue with the project on the peripheries of the State. They have tried to consolidate it through the formation of a rotating council, voluntary community work, fostering active participation of the community and democratic decision-making. All this has taken place in a climate of constant hostility and harassment by local caciques and municipal and federal authorities all of which will be explored later on.

[312] The newspaper La *Jornada* covered those events between the 17th and 24th of January 2005.
[313] Interview with Jani Jordán, bilingual teacher and member of the community radio collective, Xochistlahuaca, 2nd of February 2005.

The Implications of Alternation of Political Power in Guerrero

The victory of the PRD in February 2005 in Guerrero has not engendered significant change for the people of Xochistlahuaca. The elected candidate Zeferino Torreblanca has exhibited a moderate attitude towards the abuse of power and the impunity of the local elites, all of which is detrimental to the indigenous peoples of the state of Guerrero in general. Even representatives of the Amuzgo communities prefer to interact with federal authorities to resolve their problems[314] because the State authorities have washed their hands of this, stating that "the problems in those villages are the responsibility of the municipal authorities" (Velázquez and Cervantes 2008).[315]

The Traditional Government was fragmented on the eve of the state elections in 2005. Some community authorities and important socio-political actors allied with different political group, particularly some bilingual teachers and members of the Amuzgo Supreme Council, decided to participate in the electoral process following the parties system (Nistal and Priego 2007:54). The partisan nature of the local process resulted in a strong division amongst the principle local indigenous organisations. Hence, the leaders decided to channel their struggle through the electoral process, participating as candidates of the opposition, primarily the PRD, and distanced themselves from the Traditional Authorities and their process of self-government.

[314] However, as reporter Misael Damián has stated in the *El Sur de Acapulco*, the authorities of the Ministry of Interior have shown an ambiguous attitude towards the resolution of local conflicts (Damián 2008).
[315] Reply of the sub-secretary of the government for political matters in the state of Guerrero regarding electoral fraud and parallel governance in Guadalupe Victoria and Plan Lagarto, in August 2008 (Velázquez y Cervantes 2008).

Thus, despite the reputation for violence and abuse of authority, Aceadeth Rocha was once again elected as municipal president for the period 2005-2008. According to reports from social organisations and independent newspapers, the president is still repressing her opponents, ignoring customary forms of electing authorities and using resources and public posts for personal gain (Nistal and Priego 2007; Flores C. 2008). Since taking power she has overruled the traditional authorities and, in some cases, has appointed community authorities and created education centres that run in parallel with those of the community, which has caused division and confrontation in the Amuzgo communities (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2007; Gutiérrez 2007). All this has provoked a form of "privatisation of the functions of municipal government": officials (who were not recognised by the indigenous communities but have the public resources and support from the municipal president) have taken the office "literally home". The municipal commissioner of El Carmen, for example, hanged a sign outside his house stating "Municipal Commissioner of El Carmen" (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2007).[316]

On the 19th of January 2007, the municipal president sponsored the creation of an official community radio station using public funds, which she called "The Indigenous Voice" arguing that this initiative would be useful to hear more than one opinion (Flores C. 2008), in a clear reference to Radio Ñomnaá.[317]

[316] This is also the case of the municipal president Manuel Castañeda (2002-2005); due to the siege of the municipal palace, he took the presidency home and subsequently rented out offices. During his tenure, he did not occupy the facilities of the Constitutional Municipal Presidency. However, he still received the corresponding resources for the municipality and the formal and official recognition of the state and federal governments.

[317] Since the federal law of radio and television is stagnated in Congress, none of the community radio broadcasters are authorised. However, harassment and pressure are focused against independent community radio stations (Flores 2008).

During this second tenure of municipal government, Aceadeth Rocha has gradually reclaimed public buildings whilst the Traditional Government has acquired an increasingly low profile, which can be explained by the wearing down of the participants, constant threats of repression and a strong division of its members due to the electoral process. This has not permitted the formulation of their own proposals regarding the form in which they wish to develop their self-government processes and to relate to the different agents of the Mexican State. The participation of the members of the Traditional Government has been focused on specific actions such as collaboration with, and support for, the Indigenous Agenda for Guerrero *(la Agenda Indígena para Guerrero),* supported by the Centre for Human Rights of Tlachinollan and other social organisations from Guerrero, activities of the CNI and the *Otra Campaña Zapatista*.

The criminalisation of social organisations has increased as well as the harassment of former members of the Traditional Government and especially of the community radio. David Valtiera, the former coordinator and current collaborator of the radio, was detained on the 9th of August 2007 and accused of the same crime for which Genáro Cruz was arrested in 2004.[318] Likewise, on the 10th of July 2008, the Federal Intelligence Agency, AFI (*Agencia Federal de Inteligencia*), dispatched heavily armed officers to dismantle the community radio under the pretext that it did not have permission to broadcast and was thus in violation of the law. The members of the radio station managed to gather many followers who, after a violent scuffle, dispersed the federal police officers and representatives of the SCT. However, the equipment was left damaged and AFI officers threatened to return with backup (Gónzalez G. 2008).

[318] Personal communication with David Valtierra, person in charge of the community radio and active member of the traditional government, 18th August 2007.

Strength and Challenges of the Community Process

Main Strengths

Taking into consideration the three factors proposed by Deborah Yashar (motive, capacity and opportunity) to explain the emergence and strengthening of indigenous movements, it is possible to systematise the community process of Xochistlahuaca as follows:

The motives for the initiation of the self-government process in Xochistlahuaca were the electoral shifts and the following outbreaks of violence caused by the PRI caciques, all of which took place within a context of indifferent byt the State authorities. However, this is a local struggle, which has neither transcended ethnic demands nor manifested outside the municipal centre of Xochistlahuca. The community radio is a concrete achievement although it has focused on the "preservation of the Amuzgo culture and customs". Although it has fostered the cultural rights of the Amuzgo people, there are still other projects that amuzgo people also consider beneficial and important for their development and the quality of their living conditions. Therefore, this has been a process that responded more to electoral shifts than to the elaboration of an alternative socio-political project that is their own, cohesive, more inclusive and has a vision of the future.

One of the principle strategies of the struggle of the Traditional Government and its allies has been the siege of public buildings and blocking of roads. Although, in the short term such actions had a high impact as they caught the attention of the media and some State authorities, in the medium and long term they have fatigued its members. For example, due to the siege of the civil registry offices, many newborn children were not issued with birth

certificates because there was no "official validation".[319] Similarly, the federal resources were not distributed amongst all the members of the community because the official authority allocated them amongst its supporters under the pretext that the offices were 'under siege'.[320]

Regarding its capacity for action, representatives of the Traditional Government and the community radio have established important links with local networks at the national and international level. They have received significant support for their process of self-government as well as economic resources; for example, the French organisation, *Solidaridad y Libertad* (Solidarity and Liberty) funded the purchase of radio equipment. They also received technical support from different indigenous community radio stations and training for the Amuzgo disc-jockeys from Radio UNAM (Saavedra L. 2005). Likewise, they have been accompanied by, and have had the advice of, the Centre for Human Rights of Agustín Pro and the Centre for Human Rights of Tlachinollan, which has been particularly helpful regarding the defense and follow up of cases related to the Traditional Authorities as well as public complaints of harassment and repression in the municipality.

One of the main strengths of the community radio is the solidarity shown by the Amuzgo citizens and the support they have shown towards the project. Some of them have given resources in kind, others have volunteered and, in those moments when the project has been threatened, there have been efficient mobilisations to defend it. This is one of the principle

[319] Interview with David Valtierra, coordinator of the community radio in Xochistlahuaca, 18th of August 2004.
[320] Interview with Delfuedo de la Cruz García, bilingual teacher, Rancho del Cura-Xochistlahuaca, 1st of February 2005.

reasons why the radio station has managed to remain on air in a climate of persecution and harassment.

The Traditional Government and the committee of the community radio have been strongly influenced by the Zapatista movement, and the main leaders are active members of the CNI. Such influence is evident in their discourse and public statements, although they recognise the different conditions and particular contexts.

It is important to recognise that the traditional leaders have often personalised and overrepresented themselves in their relationships with other members of the Traditional Government and external organisations. This has caused internal disagreements and has impeded a formalised and permanent link with the self-government process, which expands beyond its representatives and leaders.

Finally, regarding the opportunities for action, the Amuzgos have found support in national and international legislation on human and indigenous rights to justify the existence of the Traditional Government and the community radio (they have specially capitalised on cultural rights). Paradoxically, the political opening for the participation and decentralisation of resources towards the municipalities and communities has had negative effects on the autonomous processes in Xochistlahuaca. Firstly, there is a heightened presence of political parties, which has given the social struggle a partisan character and has impeded the construction of a cohesive independent indigenous organisation that is not subject to electoral shifts (Gutiérrez Á. 2001:31). Secondly, the allocation of more resources to the communities by the federation has caused violent conflicts over political power and the partisan management of economic resources.

Main Challenges

The persistently divisive strategies of officials to debilitate the Traditional Government initiative and its leaders are amongst the primary challenges of the self-government processes in Xochistlahuaca. So far, they have been successful because they have fragmented and polarised allied social organisations (and communities in general) which has not allowed the advance and consolidation of the organisational project.

The Conditioning of Social Programmes

One of the most highlighted facts has been the implementation of the Programme of Certification of Ejido Rights, Procede (*Programa de Certificación de Derechos Ejidales*) which emerged from the Constitutional Reform of article 27 in 1992. In the second half of the 1990s, this process accelerated (Ventura Patiño 2006:3), reviving many conflicts over land in the municipality (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 2005:100).

The programme generated a strong division within the communities because some Amuzgos people wanted to be part of it whereas others did not. For example, the communities of Cerro Bronco and Plan de Guadalupe decided to participate in the governmental programme of land titling whilst the *ejido* owners of the municipal centre of Xochitlahuaca and Cozoyoapan decided to avoid it (Valdez 1998:159).

The Traditional Authorities reported that government officers manipulated social programmes to force *ejido* owners to participate in Procede.[321] They pointed out that: "the agrarian supporters tell people that if they join the Procede, they will have easier access to fertilizers, programmes such as *Oportunidades,* social services and governmental loans".[322]

Opponents of the Procede mentioned the negative consequences of the political and electoral management of social and development programmes in Xochistlahuaca. Particularly, the demobilisation and weaken of community dynamics such as reciprocal work and help because: "the government taught us that community work should be done in exchange for something, generally resources or benefits, and people became accustomed to getting something for their work, so now they do not want to do community work for free".[323]

This situation has been exacerbated because "youngsters do not want to participate if there is not payment, and therefore they do not want to do any community work. In general, people don't help, they don't collaborate, they don't organise themselves until there is a problem, that is when they respond and organise themselves".[324]

Apart from the fact that "the State's paternalistic approach has increased and the passivity of indigenous communities has been fostered, the manipulation of public resources has

[321] This has been denounced in different statement of the Traditional and Agrarian Authorities of Xochistlahuaca (Suljaá 2003).
[322] Interview with Edith Carvajal, member of the Workshop for Community Development (Taller para el Desarrollo Comunitario, Tadeco), Chipancingo, 19th of January 2005, and Carlos García, President of Promoters of Self-management and Development (Promotores para la Autogestión para el Desarrollo, PAD), Xochistlahuaca, 17th of August 2004.
[323] Interview with Simón Hernández, promoter of Tadeco in Costa Chica-Pitayo, Chilpancingo 19th Of January 2005.
[324] Conversation with Genáro Cruz, president of the ejido commission, Xochistlahuaca, 31st January 2005.

created divisions both in the communities that did not get any support and in those that did. This situation is explained by the government's strategy to select the beneficiaries with a notable electoral and/or partisan tendency".[325]

The Partisanisation of Social Conflict

An additional factor, which is inextricably linked to the previous issues and has caused confrontation and division across the community, is the conflicts caused by political parties. There is a consensus among the community leaders that "the political parties divide the community" and they are considered "opportunists who live off politics that are activated during the electoral period and then are forgotten".[326] They also claim that electoral campaigns take advantage of the poverty of the people to buy their vote with a lunch or some other form of incentive. They have also fostered political clientelism, which has been exacerbated by the high levels of marginalisation and poverty within that region.[327]

The Partisanisation of Authority: The Formation of Parallel Governments

During the fieldwork of this research, it was possible to see the existence of a parallel government in the community of Rancho del Cura: the "official" government led by militants of PRI, and the "traditional" government or government "of the people", which gathers members of the opposition to the PRI. As a consequence, some sectors of the

[325] Informal conversation with Miguel Ángel Mijangos, member of the PAIR, A.C., an association that belongs to the network of organisations of Costa Chica-La Montaña, 27th August 2004.
[326] Conversation with David Valtierra and Genáro Cruz, Xochistlahuaca, 18th August 2004.
[327] Interview with Omar Cruz Apóstol, university student and active member of the Traditional Authority, Xochistlahuaca, 6th of February 2005.

population feel that there is no respect for law and institutions because, in the end, the official commissioner only deals with his/her supporters and not with the whole of the population. Therefore, the allocation of public resources is conditioned, causing a serious problem of paternalism.[328]

The community division and fragmentation has even impacted upon traditional celebrations which are no longer carried out with the participation of the whole community without ethnic or political distinction.[329] In this regard, the researcher witnessed the organisation of parallel and simultaneous Amuzgo celebrations in neighbouring communities that are separated by one street as in the case of Xochistlahuaca and Cozoyopan.

Finally, one of the most difficult challenges that the self-government iniciatives face are the alliances between the municipal PRI leaders and their party at the national level (Gledhill 1998:16-7). Hence, the networks of complicity and impunity that the municipal president has been building under the direction of the PRI, have protected her from any legal accountability or effective intervention of the federal authorities regarding her abuse of power and repressive action. In this sense, the lack of consensus and the lack of a legislative majority during the two PAN federal governments have forced them to forge agreements and tolerate illegal actions in order to achieve the necessary constitutional reforms under their government plans. While, the local leaders justified their defense of "*communitarism*" or "federalism" to maintain their authoritarian structures and refuse the intervention of state and federal authorities.

[328] Interview with Delfuedo de la Cruz García, bilingual teacher, Rancho del Cura-Xochistlahuaca, 1st of February 2005.
[329] Interview with Jani Jordán, bilingual teacher and member of the community radio collective, Xochistlahuaca, 2nd February 2005.

Conclusion

As has been analysed throughout this chapter, the case of Xochistlahuaca is an example of the incomplete formation of the Mexican State, and its lack of institutional coverage in many regions, which allowed many indigenous communities to continue using their local authorities, norms and practices with a relative degree of autonomy. This situation was possible, as long as they did not challenge the structure of power and production of local caciques or/and other intermediaries.

In the last thirty years, the Amuzgo people of Xochistlahuaca have rebelled on different occasions and in different ways. There have been many struggles and independent organisational initiatives that have been targeted against the caciques and other municipal PRI powers. This is due to their authoritarian management of public matters with the complicity of the PRI state government and the permanent omission of the representatives of the federal power, including the new state PRD government.

However, the continued struggles for independence of the Amuzgo people have been short-lived and localised. The confrontation with the different control mechanism of the elites has caused them both exhaustion and erosion, demoralising them and triggering strong divisions amongst the Amuzgos and their organisations.

The last organised initiative, the Traditional Government, was weakened through the divisive strategies of municipal powers, which included coercion to obtain public resources and benefits, and the cooption of their social leaders. However, the crisis of the

corporativist system, and therefore its capacity for co-opting the leaders, caused a heightened use of public force in order to repress and control them. As one of the interviewees stated: "today, the municipal president has less resources to buy the will of people and more weapons to repress independent projects".[330]

This initiative failed to consolidate because it reproduced traditional practices and forms of government, including the role of a small group of promoters that concentrated the decision making process and the project direction. Therefore, it was easier for the government to target and/or repress some of them. In addition, some of its promoters did not see the need and/or the importance of external alliances, missing an opportunity to strength their process, and as a result localised even more their struggle. Some of its Traditional Authorities distrusted "the outside world" and, in certain periods, they closed themselves to any interaction with the state representatives and other socio-political actors.

Although it could not consolidate itself and transcend ethnic demands, the Traditional Government managed to create the community radio project, which has been the most significant challenge to the authoritarian control that the municipal PRI government has invariably exerted. Therefore, the community radio staff and its committee members have been seriously harassed and persecuted due to their independence and their permanent critique of the abuses of authority, the legitimacy that they have achieved at every other level and their desire to foster projects that generate organisational movements that are independent of the local power.

[330] Anonymous interview, Xochistlahuaca, 31st January 2005.

Nowadays, Xochistlahuaca is a highly divided and polarised municipality as a result of the authoritarian actions of the municipal authorities and the political ambitions of the political parties. The *inter* and *intra* ethnic conflicts have been manipulated and sharply aggravated during electoral periods, and the conflicts over lands have been resolved in favour of the governing elites. All of this has contributed to a dangerous climate of violence and radicalisation of the parties in conflict.

Chapter Nine
Strengths and Challenges of the Indigenous Responses to the Mexican Neo-liberal State: A Comparative Study in Costa Chica-Montaña, Guerrero

This section presents the most relevant findings of the comparative study conducted over two independent organisational initiatives of indigenous peoples. To this end, the similarities and contrasts observed in both cases will be systematically addressed. Subsequently, some general factors that explain the strengths and challenges of these responses to the neo-liberal model of the Mexican State are discussed.

One of the clearest conclusions in this chapter is that the Community Police and the System of Re-education, Security and Justice are indigenous organisational initiatives that have strengthened and consolidated themselves for more that thirteen years. In contrast, in Xochistlahuaca, the construction of an autonomous municipality with the participation of Traditional Authorities has failed.

Similarities and Contrasts

Main Similarities

Both indigenous organisational initiatives share important common elements such as, *inter alia*: the historical abandonment by the State, which was exacerbated in the early 1990s due to the deepening of structural adjustment measures; the dramatic decline of governmental resources for the countryside; and the reduction of functions of the state apparatus, amongst other governmental policies that took part in the gradual reconfiguration of the State model

towards neo-liberalism. The case studies further show the negligence and indifference of governmental authorities towards the abuses of power and violence generated by intermediary powers, particularly by caciques and local PRI representatives. With regards to the latter, the governing elites privileged indirect control mechanisms in these isolated and marginalised rural areas of the country.

In both cases, there had been previous initiatives of articulation and struggle in their municipalities and regions, most of which responded to political shifts or specific projects with varying results throughout time. In both cases, over time, the elite and the local PRI allowed indigenous groups a relative degree of autonomy regarding their organisation and functioning, as long as they did not exceed the permitted limits. However, once they decided to manage themselves autonomously and face the local powers with regards to substantial topics such as the implementation of justice and democracy, these indigenous organisations were severely harassed and repressed.

In both cases, there were evidences to suggest that the organised indigenous peoples could not fully benefit from the political and legislative changes generated at the national level regarding indigenous rights because there were no secondary laws and effective mechanisms of implementation. Therefore, these indigenous peoples decided to initiate their own organisational process and act in parallel to the State. However, due to the legal vacuum vis-à-vis indigenous rights and to the informal nature of their practises and of the definition of their rights, those organisations have been vulnerable to the discretional actions of agents of the Mexican State for the implementation of the law and public force.

The political shift that took place in Mexico in 2000, and in Guerrero in 2005, has not improved the situation for indigenous peoples in general nor the relationships of the organisations analysed in this research with the different governmental agents. On the contrary, both case studies illustrate a deterioration of political links, an acute sense of mistrust and a sense of indifference on the part of those in government to dialogue with indigenous representatives, despite the continuous efforts of the Community Police and, to a lesser extent, the Traditional Authorities of Xochistlahuaca to negotiate and reach political agreements.

In both cases, the indigenous communities have placed special emphasis on the autonomous (self-governing) character of their organisational processes and of the management of their territories because lands and natural resources play a critical role in their cultural identity and material reproduction. These values differ from the neo-liberal individualist and privatising model promoted by the governing elite, and they inexorably lead to confrontation as will be explored subsequently.

The two aforementioned initiatives are developed in a context of high levels of marginalisation, immigration, harassment by caciques and governmental repression. This situation has been further exacerbated by the growing militarisation of indigenous communities, which has been officially justified by the increase of irregular armed groups and drug trafficking and by the tendency of different governmental bodies to associate social protest with criminality. All this has generated a vicious cycle of radicalisation and violence in this sub-region of Guerrero.

Main Contrasts

In the two cases studies, amongst the key factors that have enhanced the indigenous organisational initiatives are:

a) ***The capacity to expand beyond the initial self-defence and/or resistance through the gradual creation of alternative projects with a vision of the future and independent of political and electoral shifts***. This has been one of the main differences between the two cases analysed. The Community Police have been building and consolidating their own independent political project, which has turned its members into political subjects. Furthermore, it has provided its own economic and technical means for the sustainability of the organisation. In contrast, the Traditional Authorities of Xochistlahuaca led several short-lived rebellions in response to specific turning points, or reactionary acts of resistance which did not extend beyond their initial motives. In addition, they did not know how to initiate a process of social transformation, and therefore could not create a long term project, causing discontinuity and exhaustion amongst its members.

b) ***The generation of initiatives that offer results and improve the quality of life for the participants, at least in the medium term***. The Community Police initiative has managed to provide security to the communities and has affected other areas of public welfare. These areas include the implementation of justice as well as attempts to generate alternative programmes of organisation for the comprehensive development of the communities, including all ethnic groups in the region where it is operating. Hence, the adopted initiatives have permitted the generation of tangible elements for its legitimacy and sustainability. In contrast, in the traditional municipality of Xochistlahuaca, actions of resistance and

struggle have been costly for its members, requiring significant socio-economic sacrifices for little long term benefits, with the exception of the community radio. Consequently, over time, the movement wore out, the communities were even poorer, their leaders were divided and their struggle assumed a partisan nature.

c) ***The establishment of a strong collective and horizontal leadership which works within a democratic structure with periodical accountability mechanism for their bases***. Through the "reinvention of their traditions", the Community Police have made a significant effort to maintain a plural and structured leadership with clear periodical accountability mechanisms through local and general assemblies. They have tried to achieve this through the constant rotation of posts, the community assessment of directive and decision-making posts, and the elaboration of an internal set of rules ("*Reglamento Interno")*. The organisation has placed an emphasis on the importance of "institutionalising" and "formalising" itself in order to avoid the discretionality, informality and personalised concentration of power and relationships. In contrast, in Xochistlahuaca, there was a "re-establishment of traditions" that created new hierarchies, personalised representations and excessive concentration of leadership in the hands of few, primarily the seven *principales*, the *ejido* commission and the advisors. In some cases, this supported the governmental and the political parties' strategies to co-opt key leaders, as well as the problem of an exclusive management of the relationships with external actors. All this eventually caused internal fragmentation, and the organisational initiative failed.

d) ***The construction of a collective and cultural identity within the organisation and its movement, which goes beyond the ethnic factor and becomes a strategic resource for its struggle and for the elaboration of alternative proposals***. The Community Police has

fostered collective awareness-raising in their assemblies and workshops regarding the condition of exploitation and injustice that indigenous peoples have suffered for many years. They have also insisted upon the importance of demanding that this situation changes through a coordinated effort for the defence of their rights and the consolidation of their autonomous organisation. In order to do this, there has been a progressive strengthening process (strategic plan), primarily focused at the community and regional levels although a long term aim is to have an affect at the national level. The traditional authorities of Xochistlahuaca have concentrated their efforts on reinforcing the ethnic Amuzgo character and on the deposing of the authoritarian municipal president. However, they have left aside substantial topics which need to be addressed for the comprehensive development of the municipality and the organisation, and have ignored other social sectors with high levels of social and political influence in the locality, particularly bilingual teachers.

e) ***The creation of a broad repertoire of activities to avoid the exhaustion of its members and its struggle***. Over time, the Community Police have managed to multiply their range of activities thanks to their exchange with other organisations, sectors and ethnic groups in different spaces. The following are examples of some of their activities: negotiation and the achievement of specific agreements with municipal authorities from different political parties; search for dialogue with the federal authorities; marches; collection of signatures; referendum in communities that form part of the Community System; press conferences; tables for discussion; and the formation of a civil association to receive public and private funding, amongst many others. In contrast, the Traditional Authorities of Xochistlahuaca have frequently resorted to the siege of public buildings and to the creation of parallel governments, which in the medium term was remarkably disadvantageous and exhausting for its members due to the lack of services and public benefits.

f) ***The consolidation of pluriethnic, transcommunitarian alliances without abandoning their identity, and the process of community strengthening.*** Different analysts suggest that the future of indigenous struggles will depend on their capacity to build a wide movement that embraces inclusive and multicultural alternatives and, therefore, does not reproduce the projects of exclusion and subordination that they were subjected to and that can further deteriorate the social fabric of their communities (Assies 1999; van Cott 2000a; Esteva 2001; Yashar 2005; Nash 2006). The Community Police have had the ability to integrate into wider networks and projects such as the struggle for social justice and democracy at the state and national level, without renouncing their indigenous identity and the search for their own local processes (the respect for their self-government system). Its members understood the necessity of establishing multiethnic alliances and transcending their geographic boundaries of action in order to acquire greater external support in technical assistance, as well as political and legal training. All this has strengthened its organisational capacity, the sustainability of its process and the support from more organisations, sectors and ethnic groups in the case of crises or governmental harassment. Conversely, although the Traditional Authorities of Xochistlahuaca have established important alliances with different groups and national networks mainly with the support of its young advisors, the *principales* have reproduced their lack of trust towards the "exterior" and towards "foreigners", prioritising local demands and their project to reinforce the Amuzgo character.

g) ***In the context of the democratic opening, the capacity for ownership and, in some cases, re-interpretation of political and judicial national reforms for the benefit of their processes and members.*** The neo-liberal era has paved the way for a shift in the

relationship between the State and society, digging small political and judicial fissures which have been used by some indigenous organisations to justify their actions and to demand what they consider their rights. The use of certain national and international laws have permitted them to validate their actions and claim their rights before different institutional bodies, and achieve a higher level of legitimacy and great power of interlocution with different actors. In the case of the Community Police, there has been greater concern with the dissemination of topics such as democracy and human and indigenous rights amongst its members, which has been expressed in assemblies and workshops. In contrast, in the case of the Traditional Authorities of Xochistlahuaca, the information and discourses on rights and political opportunities are concentrated in very few, which have not allowed for the empowerment and collective defense of its community members as in the case of the Community Police.

The indigenous organisations analysed in this research have faced significant challenges to consolidating themselves, both internally and externally. The following are some of the most salient issues.

Internal and External Challenges

Main Internal Challenges

*a) **Avoiding the reproduction of authoritarianism.*** Despite many efforts, these indigenous communities have had fragile organisational and decision-making structures. Therefore, at different levels and across different sectors, they have reproduced a culture of authoritarianism that they were bequeathed as a legacy. Both cases studies highlight that

discrimination amongst women and youngsters persist and that there are not efficient mechanisms to fully integrate them within community organisational processes.

b) ***Overcoming internal fragmentation.*** One of the principle characteristics of the indigenous peoples in Mexico is their heterogeneity. Therefore, there are important differences in the way in which they conceive and approach topics such as the extension of autonomy, the exercise of power and the relationship with different agencies of the government. Moreover, there is a notable division inside indigenous movements caused by the political ambition of their leaders and the opportunistic intervention and manipulation of political parties and governmental agencies. Such fragmentation has impeded the articulation and consolidation of public policies and laws that genuinely benefit indigenous peoples. In some cases, members of the community have been forced to take sides in terms of "with us or against us". This happened in 2005, when some members of the Traditional Authorities of Xochistlahuaca decided to support the PRD in order to win the municipal elections as a political alternative for change in their localities. This decision resulted in the further weakening of the structure of the traditional government.

Main External Challenges

a) ***The achievement of non-partisan political alliances***. One of the main limitations of indigenous organisations to promote and strengthen their political and legislative proposals is the lack of non-partisan political alliances which enable a better access to Congress and to the Mexican system of justice. However, the political system and its legislative are designed so that the political parties are the only actors which both represent and present proposals for laws, including the ones regarding the possibility of a comprehensive reform

of the State. This has been an obstacle for the struggle and independent action of organised indigenous peoples to articulate their claims. It has also hindered the impetus for the necessary structural changes to build a new more inclusive and pluricultural social pact which guarantees their rights and their own existence as peoples.

The main problem is that when they have decided to use political parties as a vehicle to articulate their projects, some indigenous leaders have been trapped in a vicious cycle. The more they become dependent on the logic of elections, the more they abandon their own dynamics within their organisations and neglect the demands of their localities. Additionally, this has caused internal divisions and rupture with the communities they represent, as evidenced in the case study of the Traditional Authorities of Xochistlahuaca.

As previously mentioned throughout this research, only in Oaxaca is there state legislation that allows indigenous peoples to elect their political representatives through the customary system. In all other states, they have to affiliate with a party. As the case studies demonstrate, amongst the members of the community, there is deep mistrust directed towards the parties because they only take indigenous peoples into consideration during election periods, while indigenous topics and demands are sidelined in their political agendas at other times. This perception was confirmed in a closer look at the government policy of the three main political parties in the country as they presented it to the Federal Electoral Institute, IFE (Instituto Federal Electoral) in 2007. For example, the PAN, the government's party, considers that indigenous peoples need tutelage,[331] whilst the other

[331] In the Programme of Political Action (*Programa de Acción Política*), section II, regarding community strengthening, the PAN establishes that "Families, municipalities, indigenous peoples and immigrants are communities that should be the objective of policies and laws that protect them", in other words, they should be under the government's tutelage (IFE 2006).

parties deem them vulnerable groups, neglecting their organisational experience and their demands for recognition as political subjects who wish to actively participate in the social and political transformations of the country.

*b) **Overcoming the limitations imposed by State powers**.* The obstacles to strengthening the processes of the organised indigenous people also come from other powers of the State: the judiciary and the executive. The first one, represented by the Supreme Court of Justice, has maintained itself external to the debate over the rights of indigenous peoples to the extent that it has declared itself unqualified to discuss the constitutional controversies that more than 300 indigenous municipalities presented against constitutional reforms concerning indigenous rights in 2001. In the case of the Community Police, there have been disputes over the impartiality with which the Mexican system of justice works in general, especially concerning matters that affect indigenous peoples. This is due to a legal vacuum in indigenous matters, the protracted judicial processes, the lack of interpreters and especially the lack of sensibility and acknowledgement towards the indigenous world and its cultural differences. For these reasons, and because justice is expensive, distant and, in many cases, inaccessible, The Community Police organisation and its members decided to foster the implementation of justice as an essential part of their Community System, which represents one of the biggest challenges to the Mexican legal system.

The executive power in its three governmental instances has resorted to a rhetorical discourse and to the implementation of symbolic policies regarding indigenous matters. In practise, it has demonstrated a continuous neglect and omission of indigenous peoples´ claims and actions, and with regards to the abuses of power and to the violence exerted by

local intermediaries, especially by caciques. These two topics will be explored in detail in the subsequent sections.

c) ***Neo-liberal multiculturalism as an official strategy of disarticulation.*** Since the acceleration of the neo-liberal model of Salinas's government (1988-1994), the official discourse recognised national multiculturalism, including certain rights and concessions to indigenous peoples but without representing a substantial change in the dominating economic model or a potential menace for the governing elite. Therefore such multiculturalism did not promote the necessary structural transformations to end with discrimination and with the dominant policy of inequality. Instead, it has promoted public policies and programmes such as Progresa, Procampo and Procede, in order to balance out the negative effects of the neo-liberal model on the most vulnerable. Nonetheless, in reality, these programmes are atomising indigenous populations because they damage some practises of community reciprocal help and divide communities between those that receive public resources and those that do not. Moreover, these policies contribute to the model of the "*Indio permitido*" (allowed Indian) as proposed by Charles Hale (2002), in the sense that the indigenous persons that collaborate with the government and its policies are rewarded, whereas those who demand their rights and wish to participate in the design and implementation of public programmes are punished. A clear example of this has been the permitted usage of self-government processes but without the corresponding public resources being channelled, as in the case of the municipal government of Xochistlahuca and the rebel communities of the municipality. Conversely, the organisation of the Community Police has been a forthright opponent of this situation, insisting upon their right to receive public funds to support their self-government process because its organisation conducts a public function that benefits the whole of the population.

*d) **A disorganised violence in the subregion: "the caciques are unleashed".*** Another of the main obstacles to the consolidation of the processes and initiatives of indigenous organisations are the intermediaries or local caciques who refuse to lose their privileges in, what they consider, their regions. Due to the rupture of links and commitments with the central power, they are seeking to maintain or broaden their influence or power on their own but supported by the governmental omission. In some cases, they have used coercion and direct violence, as clearly evidenced in the case of Xochistlahuaca. In other cases, they have achieved this indirectly through the use of independent armed groups, as in the case of the Community Police.

*e) **The growing criminalisation of social protest and mobilisation***. One of the most difficult challenges for indigenous organisation and mobilisation was pointed out by Rodolfo Stavenhagen, special rapporteur of the UN for indigenous peoples, during his visit to the Southeast of Mexico on the 13th of December 2006. He warned of the criminalisation or penalisation of legitimate protests or social dissidents in social conflicts. In this sense, there are multiple arrest warrants against key leaders of both initiatives that have been studied. Additionally, such warrants have been issued at the discretion of the State authorities during political turning points. The increase of State violence in the region can be explained by the fear of the governing elites of the possible strengthening of indigenous initiatives and their expansion to other regions, which would place the neo-liberal model of development at risk. The repressive responses and/or the omission by State authorities have radicalised social protest and reactions, which further nurtures the cycle of violence. This is particularly the case in Xochistlahuaca, where dialogue between State authorities and indigenous peoples is becoming increasingly difficult.

f) ***Governmental attempts at focusing the indigenous struggle.*** One of the frequently recurring responses of the state government to indigenous mobilisation and claims is their attempt to "focus" and limit them simply to their cultural dimension. Different alliances and networks have been very useful for indigenous organisations to deal with this situation, and the link of their local demands with universal principles such as democracy, justice and respect for human rights have broadened their opportunities for action and interlocution. There is encouraging evidence of this in the case of the Community Police. However, in Xochistlahuaca, the government has not intervened to stop violence and abuses of municipal authority, under the excuse of respecting federalism and decentralisation and arguing that these are local and intercommunity conflicts.

g) ***Extreme poverty and immigration.*** Other enormous challenges for indigenous peoples are the accelerated economic changes stemming from the rapid entrance of neo-liberal capitalism into rural communities, which has generated higher levels of poverty and a constant threat to their natural resources and community dynamics. This has hindered their re-articulation and organisation, particularly due to the high levels of immigration which are leaving whole communities without any men or youngsters as is evident in the case of both initiatives.

General Conclusions

Since Mexican Independence, there have been three attempts to build the Nation State: the Post-Independence phase (1821-1929), the Post-Revolutionary phase (1929-1982) and the Neo-liberal phase (1985 to date). In all these attempts indigenous peoples have been excluded as active participants in the construction of the State. These nation building efforts have failed because of the incomplete nature of two processes that authors such as Charles Tilly (1990) have deemed fundamental: the "centralisation" and "civilianisation" of the power of the State. In other words, neither the monopoly of the use of force nor the control over the means of violence have been achieved, and political institutions have not been fully consolidated in order to be legitimised through a routine negotiation with different sectors of society. On the contrary, during the post-revolutionary phase, for example, the State, used many informal mechanism of control, such as the use of discretionary powers, political illegal pacts, cooption, coercion, intermediary caciques and corruption, amongst others, which increasingly eroded the weak and incipient formal institutions and with them the governance and sustainable development of the country.

The third attempt of the governing elites started in the mid-1980s as a consequence of the severe economic crisis of the model of industrialisation and the adoption of the neo-liberal doctrine. The gradual dismantling of the post-revolutionary State and its incapacity to substitute its wide control mechanisms, and new national and international pressures have led to difficulties in consolidating the neo-liberal State, which have challenged its capacity to govern. Due to this situation, two prominent parallel phenomena have emerged: on the one hand, the increased use of State violence; on the other hand, the growing mobilisation of organised indigenous opposition, which represents one of the greatest challenges to the

consolidation of the current State model. They have articulated their opposition in multiple ways: from peacefully stopping hydroelectric mega-projects in their territories, to the armed struggle.

In this context, this research was developed with two main objectives: 1) exploring how the State reconfiguration triggered by the adoption of the neo-liberal model has unveiled the complex system of post-revolutionary State control and, at the same time, has inflamed the use of State violence in the contemporary State formation; and 2) identifying which responses from organised indigenous peoples represent a significant challenge to the neo-liberal State model.

The following section presents the main contributions of this research. Subsequently, the most important conclusions of this study will be discussed, after which the main political implications will be highlighted. Finally, the author will posit suggestions regarding future areas for research.

Conceptual and Empirical Contributions

This research makes innovative conceptual and empirical contributions. From a conceptual perspective, in the first chapter, it is proposed an approach to broaden the analytical framework to understanding of mechanisms of formation and control of the Mexican post-revolutionary State beyond the dichotomy of the corporatist approach -which minimises the use of violence- and the critical approach –which emphasises it. Therefore, it offers an approach that highlights the wide spectrum of control mechanisms used by the governing

elite, both formal and informal –which have been cast aside or studied in a separate way within contemporary research on the formation of the Mexican State.

This contribution helps demystify the notion of a centralised and omnipresent Mexican State, and shows its incomplete formation and uneven presence in isolated and marginalised regions of the country in which informal and indirect control mechanism were privileged such as the exercise of authority by caciques and other local intermediaries.

The argument is empirically substantiated with two case studies in the sub-region of Costa Chica-Montaña de Guerrero. They evidence the abandonment by governmental institutions and the failure of polices aimed at assimilation. The latter did not manage to create a unique national identity (the Mestizo identity) but allowed the survival of both political cultural identities and of some discrete forms of indigenous autonomy that in some cases were skilfully manipulated by local intermediaries to maintain political and social stability. In addition, this research presents a comparative study of the two cases, hence empirically demonstrating, based on the theoretical framework proposed by Deborah Yashar (2005), some of the key factors in explaining the strengthening and consolidation of indigenous organisations due to the shift of the State model, as well as their main challenges in Mexico.

Principle Findings

After a detailed chronological study of the formation of the Mexican State based on two main analytical axes (the mechanisms of State control and the role of the indigenous peoples), and based on a comparative study of the two cases of indigenous organisations in

the sub-region of Costa Chica-Montaña de Guerrero – including 79 semi-structured interviews and participant observation in several indigenous communities that were part of the cases analysed-, the following are the findings of the research. One of the main conclusions is that the governmental elites have used more direct violence since the adoption of the neo-liberal model and the imminent reformulation of the Mexican State due to: 1) the weakness and/or gradual disappearance of different post-revolutionary mechanisms of political and social control, and the incapacity of the governing elites to efficiently substitute them; 2) pressures of agents of the global market upon the government to free resources that were previously "protected" in order to compliment new economic dynamics; and 3) the emergence of multiple indigenous organisations and mobilisations, which have been strengthened by national and international phenomena. These organisations have articulated themselves in response to the abandonment of the State and the neo-liberal threat to their resources and way of life, as well as to demand full participation in the design and implementation of those governmental policies that affect them.

With regards to the first finding, the different mechanisms allowed the post-revolutionary regime to control and/or establish links with wide sectors of Mexican society in order to carry out their model of modernisation without the frequent use of violence. The clearest case was the dominating hegemony that was primary focused on revolutionary nationalism which signified a commitment of the State, in conjunction with different social sectors to promote social justice and the construction of national welfare as priorities. This together with other formal and informal control mechanisms allowed the political elite to govern with a certain degree of legitimacy and with the minimum use of violence until the severe crisis of governance emerged towards the end of the 1960s. This last incident forced the

elite to implement new control mechanisms that allowed for the continuity of the industrialised economic model until the beginning of the 1980s when the foreign debt crisis marked its end.

With the adoption of the neo-liberal economic model and its strategy of opening up toward the international market, there was a rupture of the previous social pact, and a higher level of commitment with and privileges for private initiatives and international agents, especially with transnational companies. As part of the political demands of structural adjustment of the neo-liberal model, public resources that supported some of the key control mechanisms of the regime were reduced, as in the case of the system of incorporation or cooptation. Therefore, public resources ceased to flow towards the different sectors of the population, including indigenous peoples, so they began to protest and increasingly organise themselves in different ways due to lack of response and repression.

Additionally, neo-liberal policies weakened the capacity of the governing elites to maintain previous loyalties, particularly pacts with intermediaries and/or local caciques to control and guarantee the stability of isolated and marginalised areas, correspondingly a disorganised violence has emerged in many regions. All this has caused an increase in the use of public force, especially by the army, to re-establish control and guarantee the application of the neo-liberal economic model at any costs.

The second finding of this research is that there has been a higher level of pressure on the governing elites by national and international companies to stop protecting what are considered “national commodities” such as collective lands and natural resources, and

liberate them into the markets. Many of these goods are in indigenous territories, and business groups want to insert them into the global market through the construction of infrastructural mega-projects to connect different economic enclaves in order to mobilise those resources to new dynamics of the market. However, the elites have faced serious difficulties and the resistance of different actors, particularly indigenous peoples which have organised themselves in different spaces and in different forms to avoid the looting and privatisation of their resources and the destruction of their ways of life and communities' dynamics.

With regard to the third finding, it is possible to argue that neo-liberalism has "awakened" and mobilized indigenous peoples, as never before in the history of Mexico, and they have empowered and organised themselves in multiple ways as a response to the affects of the shift in State models. As it has been pointed out throughout this research, in the past, indigenous peoples participated in important struggles and resistances against the arbitrary nature of power relations. However, those were mostly local and subordinated to others sectors, so they did not represent a serious challenge to the State. Although neo-liberal reforms have brought with them seriously negative consequences for indigenous peoples, such as threats to their resources and community dynamics, they have also generated spaces and new legal and political instruments of struggle. These have allowed for small political and legal fissures to emerge, which many groups have exploited to reinforce their identity, reclaim their rights and broaden their capacity to interact with governmental agencies and with other national and international sectors. This has given the opportunity to a wide range of indigenous forms of action -from local demands, the siege of public buildings, the construction of rebel *de facto* autonomies to the armed struggle- to be able to claim their rights and in response to the shift of the State model.

This point takes us to the second research question regarding which of these multiple responses of the organised indigenous peoples constitute a real challenge to the Mexican neo-liberal State. The main conclusion is that indigenous people that represent a real challenge are organising themselves in an independent manner to avoid being reincorporated to a neo-liberal model designed from above that exclude them as political subjects but endeavours to re-incorporate them, and their resources, as objects. For this reason, they not only struggle for self-government to preserve their culture and practises, but they also want to build their own processes of organisation and development, and become real interlocutors in order to actively participate in the creation of State policies and projects that guarantee their collective identity, their rights and their survival.

In this fashion, indigenous organisations that have generated initiatives challenging the neo-liberal model are those that have strengthened their internal practices and processes through the consolidation of their organisation, structure and democratic authority. They also want to participate, in a strategic alliance with other actors, in the construction of alternative and sustainable models of autonomy. This is the case of the Community Police and the System of Re-education, Security and Justice which, as illustrated in the comparative study, has been able to consolidate and strengthen the process because: a) it has created its own programme with a vision of the future; b) it has been able to generate results and improve the quality of life of its members (at least in the medium term); c) it has a strong collective and horizontal leadership that works within a democratic structure with periodic accountability mechanisms; d) it has built a collective and cultural identity within the organisation that all members share; e) it has created a wide repertoire of forms of action to avoid the exhaustion of their struggle and its members; f) it has consolidated pluriethnic

and transcommunity alliances in order to enhance its projects and demands; g) it has taken advantage of the political and legal reforms in order to strengthen its processes, empower its members and launch a collective defense of its organisational processes; and h) it has generated expansive processes of collective organisation in different spheres of interest for its communities and allies.

In addition, indigenous organisations that challenge the State model have been able to "reinvent their traditions" and generate responses to the multifaceted challenges they have faced themselves throughout the neo-liberal era, such as the authoritarian legacy; the different types of discrimination against them; internal fragmentation; militarisation; the increase of drug trafficking and organised crime; the criminalisation of social process and mobilisation by State agents; the violent resistance of caciques who fear the loss of privileges and power; and the serious limitation for indigenous groups to fostering their political and legal initiatives without the intermediation of political parties, amongst others.

Finally, one of the most interesting findings both in the literature and in the different interviews conducted during this research, is the existence of two opposing visions on the way in which the Mexican State and its essential functions should be transformed in the neo-liberal era.

On the one hand, the governing elite, increasingly allied to the transnational business elite, believe that the development and modernisation of the country will be achieved through a tighter integration of local economies and development enclaves to the global market through infrastructural mega-projects. They expect these projects to modernise the country and make it more efficient, attracting, at the same time, foreign investment and engendering

a better performance by private companies. Therefore, the essential function of the State is to guarantee the application of neo-liberal policies and offer investors the necessary security. This way, as a political analyst suggests: "neo-liberalism does not diminish the State but strengthens its coercive capacities to impose policies that are not popular" (Vadi 2001:130). With this vision, the governing elites continue to maintain a State that is built and designed by a few, ethnocentric, and with a clear tendency to maintain the cultural and economic hegemony.

On the other hand, different sectors that remain outside of the governing elites have had debates over the importance of conducting a deep reconfiguration of the State, something unprecedented in the history of Mexico. This is the case of indigenous groups who organised themselves initially around the Zapatistas and in alliance with other social and political actors to propose a fundamental change in the State "because otherwise everything will remain the same". They argue that it is necessary to carry out structural reforms which are conducive to a new social pact that is expressed in a different State model that is plural and inclusive and also has a broader conceptualisation of citizenship and democracy. The new State apparatus should be able to guarantee economic, social and cultural rights and should not be limited to formal political and civil rights as is the case with the current minimalist concept of the neo-liberal State.

What is particularly interesting is that amongst organised indigenous peoples and other sectors of society, there is a perception of the State as the only entity that can guarantee their forms of government and organisation. From this perspective, they need to have an effect on the State because it remains the only organ that can ensure their collective rights are respected; rectify policies that have had adverse affects on them; foster educational

programmes and intercultural policies that promote peaceful coexistence; and put an end to discrimination, amongst other affirmative actions.

Political Implications

The neo-liberal Mexican State is in crisis because it has not transformed its structures to respond to the new necessities and aspirations of a pluricultural society that demands more spaces and forms of participation and representation. The current political institutions are unable to acknowledge and accept this reality. Furthermore, despite the partisan alternation of power, authoritarian and discriminatory practices of the past are still prevalent. This can be explained by the deep-rooted historical legacy that has resulted in a lack of willingness on the part of the governing elites to conduct fundamental structural changes to consolidate a genuinely democratic and sustainable State.

A clear example of this is the Constitution of 1917 which is still valid and reflects the form in which the post-revolutionary State was built: ethnically homogenous, centralised and authoritarian. This Constitution has been amended more than 700 times (63% of the amendments correspond to the period in which the most rapid acceleration of Salinas's neo-liberal process took place)[332] simply to patch over what is lacking, devoid of carrying out deep changes necessary to represent a new national and international political reality.

Therefore, it is necessary to agree a new Constitution that favours the transition towards a new State wherein the existing cultural plurality is recognised, respected and genuinely

[332] Information from the presentation by Madga Gómez in the "Mesa sobre globalización y pueblos indígenas: recursos naturales y empresas transnacionales", organised by La Red Latinoamericana de Antropología Jurídica (Relajus), Oaxtepec, Morelos, México, 18th of October 2006.

guaranteed. This initiative should incorporate new mechanisms to enable citizens in general to directly promote legal reforms and other instruments of a direct and participative democracy. However, the biggest problem is that this new Constitution would have to change the fundamental basis upon which it has been built and include new rules, which is not convenient or of interest to the political class, especially to political parties that are the only actors legally capable of making a State Reform. This situation is particularly difficult because they have incurred the benefits of the system for so many years and do not want to put their privileges at risk. Hence, they have insisted on some reforms that are designed and implemented from above. For instance, they have concentrated their efforts on the reform of the electoral system and other reforms to ensure electoral competition and open spaces for legitimisation. In this fashion, they avoid deep changes that could hinder their powers and the neo-liberal State model.

Consequently, the task of building and consolidating the Mexican State is still pending because in the contemporary climate, there are no possibilities for a social political and democratic transformation.

Future Lines of Research

The heterogeneity of indigenous peoples and the complexity of their protests do not allow for generalisations or for attempts to cover all the aspects. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out case studies and comparative studies in order to place emphasis on the particularities and explain the variations present in the region and even within the communities.

There are topics regarding indigenous organisation that are still unexplored and that it is necessary to study in a deeper and more interdisciplinary way. For example, one of the major deficits in this study is the gender perspective, which was unfortunately beyond the scope of this research. Undoubtedly, it would have offered a more complete and enriching vision of indigenous responses to the neo-liberal model of the State, particularly because it is precisely indigenous women who are making demands –albeit in a timid and discreet fashion- for rethinking and reinventing traditions and new forms to build autonomous community processes.

Other topic that would be interesting to investigate is the impact that the legislation on indigenous rights has had in different states of the Republic (since the constitutional reforms of 2001), particularly, on the quality of life and the rights of local indigenous communities. In this sense, it is important for research to be conducted on whether these state legislatives have managed to improve levels of representation and interlocution of organised indigenous peoples with different State institutions. In other words, it is important to research if this "new" form of institutional and formal relationship has been strengthened and if it has been possible to apply governmental policies that include indigenous peoples but at the same time respect their self-government to regulate their own internal affairs and manage their resources.

Due to the resistance of the governing elites, in particular political parties, to carry out a deep reform of the Mexican State, it would be interesting to study which of the two main lines of political action of national indigenous movements is strengthened: taking power and exercising it (through the formation of indigenous political parties or through national

political associations) or the transformation of the State without taking power (*de facto* political autonomy).

In relation to this issue, it would be interesting to analyse in greater detail the manipulated or reactionary autonomies that, under the pretext of decentralisation and a legal vacuum with regards to self-determination, have emerged in some regions of the country impeding processes of democratisation and modernisation.

Finally, a central theme to be assessed in the future is the impact of immigration and the remittances from diaspora groups on the configuration and reconfiguration of the processes of organisation of indigenous peoples at the local level.

Appendices

Appendix I: List of Interviews and Communities visited

List of interviews in Spanish

1) Carlos García, Presidente de Promotores de la Autogestión para el Desarrollo (PADs), Chilpancingo, 16 de Agosto del 2004.
2) Abel Barreda, Presidente del Centro de Derechos Humanos Tlachinollan, Chilpancingo, 17 de Agosto, 2004.
3) Juan Alarcón, Ombusman de derechos humanos del estado de Guerrero, Chilpancingo, 18 de Agosto del 2004.
4) Genáro Cruz Apostol, Presidente de la Comisaria Ejidal, Xochistlahuaca, 19 de Agosto del 2004
5) David Valtierra, Coordinador de la radio comunitaria, Xochistlahuaca, 19 de Agosto del 2004.
6) Hilda Navarrete, Directora de la organización Voz de los sin voz, Coyuca de Benitez, 21y 29 de Agosto del 2004
7) Silvestre Pacheco, Escritor y analista guerrerense, Zihuatanejo, 24 de Agosto del 2004
8) Cristóbal Aburto, Secretario del municipio de Zihuatanejo, 24 de Agosto del 2004
9) Eva Alarcón, líder ecologista, Petatlán, 25 de Agosto del 2004
10) Pedro Reyes, encargado de Desarrollo rural del Municipio de Petatlán, 25 de Agosto del 2004
11) Miguel Ángel Mijango, Miembro del Pair, San Luis Acatlan, 27 de Agosto de 2004
12) Bruno Plácido, miembro activo de la CRAC, San Liuis Acatlán, 27 Agosto 2004.
13) Jesús Carranza, Excomisario y Chofer de la CRAC, San Luis Acatlán, 27 dce agosto del 2005
14) Ana Luisa Bravo, Departamento de Seguridad Pública, Zihuatanejo, 31 de Agosto 2004
15) José Martínez, Subdirector de Seguridad Pública, Zihuatanejo, 31 de Agosto 2004
16) David Luna, Asesor de información seguridad pública, Zihuatanejo, 31 de Agosto 2004
17) Eusebio Pérez, Secretario PRD, La Unión, 1 de Septiembre 2004
18) Nehemias de la Rosa Galindo, Asesor de desarrollo comunitario, Tecpan de Galeana, 2 de Septiembre de 2004
19) Reynaldo Soria, Lider local PRD, San Luis de la Loma, 2 de Septiembre 2004
20) Arturo García, Director de la Red de Organizaciones Sustentables Autogestiva (RASA), Atoyac de Alvaréz, 3 de Septiembre 2004
21) Maribel Gutiérrez, Periodista del Sur y autora del libro violencia en Guerrero, Chilpancingo, 3 de Septiembre de 2004
22) Carlos García, Presidente de Promotores de la Autogestion para el Desarrollo (PAD), Ocotillo, 3 de Septiembre 2004
23) Silvia Castillo, Representante del Instituto Guerrerense de Derechos Humanos, 4 de Septiembre2004
24) Ernesto Insulsa, Director académico del CIESAS-DF, 8 de Septiembre 2004.

Segunda visita: La segunda visita se realizó 21 de Diciembre del 2004 al 21 de Febrero 2005.

25) Gregorio Castillo, Responsable de asuntos legales del IFAI, DF, 21 Diciembre 2004
26) Carlos García, Presidente de PADs, Chilpancingo, 10 Enero 2005

27) Edith Carbajal, Directora del Taller de Desarrollo Comunitario (Tadeco), Chilpancingo, 17 de Enero 2005
28) Simón Hernández, promotor de TADECO en la Costa Chica-Pitayo, Chilpancingo 17 de Enero 2005.
29) Genaro Cruz, Presidente de la Comisaria Ejidal, Xochistlahuaca, 18 Enero 2005
30) Petrona Cruz, Líder indígena y participante activa en la radio comunitaria, 19 de Enero 2005.
31) Renato Rabelo, Escritor y analista sobre cuestiones agrarias en Guerrero, Buena Vista, 23 Enero 2005.
32) Martha Plácido, Enfermera comunitaria, Buena Vista San Luis Acatlán, 23 de Enero 2005.
33) Bruno Plácido, miembro activo de la CRAC, Metlatónoc, 23 y 24 Enero 2005.
34) Isela Rodríguez, Secretara Ejecutiva de la CRAC, San Luis Acatlán, 26 de Enero 2005.
35) Crispín de la Cruz, Miembro del PRD, San Luis Acatlán 26 de Enero 2006
36) Héctor Nava, Miembro del PRD, San Luis Acatlán, 26 de Enero 2006.
37) Genáro Cruz, Presidente de la Comisaria Ejida, 31 de Enero 2005
38)Delfuedo de la Cruz García, Profesores bilingües y promotor del PRD, Rancho del Cura- Xochistlahuaca, 1 de Febrero 2005.
39) Mario de la Cruz López, Profesor bilingüe y promotor del PRD, Rancho del Cura-Xochistlahuaca, 1 de Febrero 2005.
40) David Valtierra Arango, Coordinador de la Radio Comunitaria y ayudante de las autoridades tradicionales, Xochistlahuaca, 2 Febrero 2005.
41) Jani Jordá Hernández, Profesora bilingüe y miembro del colectivo de la radio comunitaria, Xochistlahuaca, 2 de Febrero 2005.
42) Entrevista a Gerardo Rodríguez, Jornalero agrícola, Rancho del Cura-Xochistlahuaca, 5 de Febrero 2005.
43) Entrevista a Artemio Bautista Lorenzo, agricultor, Cozoyoapan-Xochistlahuaca, 6 de Febrero 2005.
44) Omar Cruz Apóstol, Estudiante de posgrado, Xochistlahuaca, 6 de Febrero 2005.
45) Daniel Sánchez, ex candidato y Promotor del voto por el PRD, 6 de Febrero 2005.
46) Carlos González, Asesor del Municipio Tradicional, Xochistlahuaca, 7 de Febrero 2005.
47)Rodrigo Méndez, Fotografo de fiestas culturales, Xochistlahuaca, 7 de Febrero 2005.
48) Gerardo Reyes Ortega, Presidente municipal de San Luis Acatlán (1996-1999), 9 de Febrero 2005.
49) América Berum, Funcionaria de los Juzgados de Paz, San Luis Acatlán, 9 de Febrero 2005
50)Cecilia Galindo, Comerciante y victima de la violencia, San Luis Acatlán, 9 de Febrero 2005.
51) Leandro Calleja, Policía comunitario, San Luis Acatlán, 10 Febrero 2005.
52) Agustín Barrera, miembro fundador y comandante de la policía, San Luis Acatlán, 10 Febrero 2005.
53) Mario Altamirano, Profesor, San Luis Acatlán, 11 Febrero 2005.
54) Juan Vazquez, Agricultor y pariente de Genaro Vázquez, San Luis Acatlán, 11 de Febrero 2005
55) Pantaleón Reyes Rosario, Comisario Municipal en la comunidad de Zoyatlán en Marquelia, 14 de Febrero 2005.
56) Francisco de los Santos, Comerciante y Ganadero local, San Luis Acatlán, 14 de Febrero 2005.

57) Pedro González Ventura, Policía comunitario de Miahuichán, 14 de Febrero 2005.
58) Mardonio Liberio García, Comandante de Miahuichán, 14 de Febrero 2005.
59) Entrevista anónima a mujer víctima de la violencia, San Luis Acatlán, 15 de Febrero 2005
60) Gustavo Carrión, Párroco de la iglesia católica, San Luis Acatlán, 16 Febrero 2005.
61) Alfredo Mesa, Comisario Municipal en la comunidad de Miahuichán San Luis Acatlán, 16 de Febrero 2005.
62) Medardo Velasco H., Preso en las cárceles de la CRAC, San Luis Acatlán, 16 de Febrero 2005.
63) Isidro Honorio, Preso en las cárceles de la CRAC, San Luis Acatlán, 16 de Febrero 2005
64) Evaristo Ramírez Silva, Comandante de Policía, Yoloxochil, 17 Febrero 2005.
65) Nicolás de la Cruz Manzano, miembro de la comisaría de Cuanacaxtitlan, San Luis Acatlán, 17 de Febrero 2005.
66) Román García Castro, Síndico y procurados de seguridad del municipio de Malinaltepec, 18 de Febrero 2005.
67) Modesto Galindo, Comandante de la Policía, San Luis Acatlán, 18 Febrero 2005
68) Jaime Santos Delgado, Comisario de la CRAC 2004-2005, Malinaltepec, 18 Febrero 2005.
69) Román García Castro, Síndico Procurador de Seguridad Pública, Malinaltepec, 18 Febrero 2005.
70) Valentín Hernández, Asesor de la figura jurídica, San Luis Acatlán, 19 de Febrero 2005
71) Dolores Pérez, Secretaria del Comité Ejecutivo de la Policía Comunitaria, San Luis Acatlán, 19 de Febrero 2005.
72) Omar Gervasio Rodríguez, Secretario Ejecutivo de la Secretaria de Seguridad Pública, Chilpancingo, 21 Febrero 2005.
73) Ardin Coss, Asesora del Consejo Estatal de Seguridad Pública, Chilpancingo, 21 Febrero 2005.
74) Gonzálo Santos Salazar, Secretario Auxiliar del Tribunal Superior de Justicia del Estado de Guerrero, Chilpancingo, 21 Febrero 2005.
75) Emmanuel Ferrari, Miembro de Brigadas Internacionales de Paz, Chilpancingo, 21 de Febrero 2005.
76) Carmen Montes, Directora de Misión Civil por la Paz, DF, 3 de Marzo del 2005
77) Victor Rico, Miembro de Misión Civil por la Paz, DF, 3 de Marzo del 2005
78) Erendira Cruz V., Directora de Centro de Comunicación Social (Cencos), 3 de Marzo 2005
79) Felicitas Martínez, Miembro y asesora de la CRAC, Oaxtepec-Morelos, 20 de Octubre 2006.
80) Neptalí (Sobrenombre), miembro del Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente (ERPI), lugar desconocido, fecha reservada 2005.

Se realizaron 5 entrevistas en las que los entrevistados solicitaron anonimato.

La observación participativa se realizó de dos formas principales:
a) Se realizaon actividades concretas tanto en las oficinas de la CRAC localizadas en la cabecera de San Luis Acatlán como en la Comisaria Ejidal de Xochistlahuaca, ubicada en la cabecera municipal del mismo nombre.

b) Se participó y asistió a diferentes asambleas comunitarias, talleres sobre derechos humanos, y visitas a distintas comunidades que forman parte del Sistema Comunitario de Seguridad, Justicia y Reeducación, y del municipio de Xochistlahuaca.

Asistencia a las Asambleas Regionales Comunitarias

- El Carmen, comunidad de San Luis Acatlán, 20 de Febrero 2005.
- Pueblo Hidalgo, comunidad de San Luis Acatlán, 23 de Enero 2005 (pospuesta por falta de *quórum* y por presiones políticas del entonces candidato a la gubernatura por el PRI)

Asistencia en los talleres sobre derechos humanos y derechos indígenas en la región:

- Poza Verde, Miahuichan y Loma Bonita, comunidades de la municipalidad de San Luis Acatlán, 27 de Agosto 2004.
- Capulín Chocolate y Zoyatlán, comunidades de las municipalidades de Azoyu, 28 de Agosto 2004.
- Oficinas centrales de la CRAC, San Luis Acatlán, 16 de Febrero 2005.

Participación en el taller sobre derechos humanos de las mujeres indígenas

- Buena Vista, Comunidad de San Luis Acatlán, 23 de Enero 2005.

Se acompañó a los profesores bilingües en su campaña de promoción del voto en distintas comunidades del municipio de Xochistlahuaca en Febrero del 2005: Crucero Caminos, Piedra Pesada, la Ciénega, Cumbre y Rancho del Cura. Finalmente, visité Cozoyoapan para el monitoreo de casilla electorales el día de la elección.

También se acopañó a Genáro Cruz, Comisario Ejidal, a Arroyo Grande para la resolución de conflictos limítrofes y para la celebración de acuerdos.

Asistencia a Congresos relacionados:

-Asistencia al V Congreso de la Red LatinoAméricana de Antropología Jurídica: Justicia y Diversidad en tiempos de la globalización realizado del 16 al 20 de Octubre del 2006, en Oaxtepec, México.

Appendix II: Glossary of Spanish Terms and Acronyms

AGN: National General Achive
ANIPA: National Plural Indigenous Assembly for Autonomy
CAP: Consejo Agrario Permanente
CAI: Council of Indigenous Authorities
CCI: Independent Peasant Confederation.
CDI: National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples.
COCOPA: Commission on Concordance and Pacification
CONASUPO: National Company for Popular Subsistence
CRAC: Regional Coordinator of Communitarian Authorities.
CRCX: Regulating Peasant Committee of Xochistlahuaca
CNC: National Peasant Confederation
CNI: National Indigenous Congress
CNOP: National Confederation of Popular Organizations
CNPI: National Council of Indigenous Peoples
CTM: Mexican Labour Confederation
EZLN: Zapatista National Liberation Army
FCIX: Indigenous Civil Front of Xochistlahuaca
FEMOSPP: Special Prosecutor Office for Social and Political Movements of the Past
FIPI: Independent Front of Indian Peoples
ICHR: Inter-American Commission of Human Rights
INEGI: National Statistic Institute of Geography and Informatics
INI: National Institute for Indigenous
ISI: Import Substitution Industrialization
OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAN: National Action Party
PRD: Democratic Revolutionary Party
PRI: Institutional Revolutionary Party
PROCAMPO: Support Program for Ejido Marketing.
PROCEDE: Program for the Certification of Ejidos land Rights and the Titling of Urban House Plots
NAFTA: North American Free Trade Agreement
NPA: National Political Associations
PRONASOL: National Solidarity Program.

Glossary

Agrarismo: The ideology and/or political movement in favor of agrarian reform.
Agrarista: Supporters or beneficiaries of agrarian reform
Alcalde: Mayor of a town
Anagsa: Agricultural and livestock insurance company
Arrendatarios: Tenant farmers
Cacicazgo: Local political authority or power, literally chieftainship.
Cacique: A politically powerful individual, also known as political boss or strongman
Caudillo: Political, ideological and military local and/or regional leaders.
Clientelism: A reciprocal personalized political relationship that involves economic and political favors from a notable or politician in return for a person´s loyalty and support. Also know as a patron-client relationship.

COCOPA: Multiparty congressional commission for the peace process in Chiapas.
Comisaría: Political and administrative sub-division of the municipality. The comisaria is the seat of town government, and can be translated as town hall.
Comisario: The principal public official in a town or village subject to the seat of municipal government (Town mayor).
Comisario Ejidal: Local official able to regulate access to land and resources(Town officer responsible for agrarian matters).
Compadrazgo: Ritual kinship ties between parents and godparents, co-parenthood
CONASUPO: Governmental agency for the purchase and distribution of basic crops in rural areas
Coyote: Economic intermediary. A person who initiated his process of capital accumulation from the surplus extracted from the peasant unequal exchange of products.
Criollo: Born in Mexico but of Spanish ancestry
Ejidatario: A member of an ejido
Ejido: Community-owned land held in usufruct from the government by a village or town.
Encomienda: Royal grant of rights to collect tribute from specified Indian groups
Encomendero: Holder of an encomienda
Guardías blancas: The private bodyguards or gang of thugs employed by large-scale landowner.
Guerrerense: A native of Guerrero
Hacendados: Large landholders or estate owner
Hacienda: Large landed estate usually devoted to grain production and/or ranching
Halcones: Urban shock groups comprised mainly of suburban youths and used to repress socio-political protests
Jornalero: Day wage labours
Latifundios: Large private estate owners characterised by pre-capitalist relations of production and labour.
Mestizo: Person of mixed European and Indian ancestry
Milpa: Small plot of land for maize and other small scale cultivation
Municipio: Municipality; the smallest political and administrative units
Pistolero: A gunfighter or assasin
Principales: Respected village elders with leadership capacities. Also known as high-ranking indian, nobleman.
Ranchero: Minifundista or small scale farmer
Rancho: Small or medium private landholding.
Rurales: Rural police force
Sistema de Cargos: A socio-religious hierarchy of rotating post recognized as the predominant form of local government in many Mexican indigenous regions
Tequio: Collective labour on public works required by the community as a form of taxation

Appendix III: Statistics of Guerrero

The following statistics are taken from *Servicios Internacionales para la Paz* (SIPAZ), a program of international observation that had its beginning in 1995, following the Zapatista uprising in 1994. It was formed to monitor the conflict in Chiapas, México. Today SIPAZ supports the search for nonviolent solutions that contribute to the construction of a just peace through building tolerance and dialogue among the actors in Chiapas as well as, increasingly, in other areas in México (Oaxaca and Guerrero).

INDIGENOUS POPULATION

The state of Guerrero has a total population of 3,079,649, of which 17.2% are indigenous (529,780 people). The indigenous population in Guerrero is found principally in the Mountain region and, to a lesser degree, in the Costa-Chica region, both of which are the most marginalized areas in the state.

The indigenous population is comprised of 4 different groups:

- 212,000 Nahualts (nauas) make up 40% of the indigenous population
- 148,000 Mixtecos (na savi), 28%
- 116,000 Tlapanecos (me 'phaa), 22%
- 47,500 Amuzgos (suljaa'), 9%

SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

According to socioeconomic indicators for the year 2000 provided by the National Council on Population (CONAPO), Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero form a triangle of extreme poverty in Mexico.

The Mountains region of Guerrero is among the 36 "prioritized" regions in Mexico, which have as their common denominator poverty, migration, violence and militarization. Of the 17 municipalities in the Mountains, 11 are considered to have a very high level of marginalization (CONAPO 2004). Metlatónoc is the poorest municipality in Mexico, followed by Coicoyán de las Flores (Oaxaca), a neighboring municipality.

Source : CONAPO 2004

1. INCOME

- More than 53,000 workers do not earn an income. The indigenous population is the most affected; 46% of the indigenous population older than 15 does not have an income.

- Around 28,000 workers (24% of the indigenous population older than 15 in Guerrero) earn less than the monthly minimum wage.
- Great disparities are apparent: in Acapulco, 5% of the indigenous population older than 15 does not earn an income; meanwhile in Acatepec or Atlixtac, of the Mountains region, close to 80% of the same slice of the population does not earn an income.

Source : INI 2002

2. HOUSING

- Guerrero is 2nd in the nation in respect to the inadequacy of its housing. *(Source: INEGI 2000)*
- Between 80 and 100% of housing in indigenous municipalities in Guerrero does not comply with minimal standards for humane living conditions.
- 40% of the homes in Guerrero have a dirt floor.
- 29% of houses (72% in the Mountains region) do not have running water and more than 500 communities (56%) lack running water in areas in which natural water sources are few and far away.
- 47% of housing in the state does not have drainage (97% in the Mountains region).

3. EDUCATION

Illiteracy:

- 22% of the general population is illiterate; half of the indigenous population cannot read or write.
- In the most marginalized indigenous municipalities, this percentage is even higher: 88% in San Marcos, 71% in Metlatónoc, 67% in Ahuacuotzingo, 65% in Xochistlahuaca.
- Guerrero is second highest in the nation in regards to illiteracy among women (more than 23%, compared with the national level of 9.5%; Chiapas is first with 25.5% and Oaxaca third with 22%). *Sources: INEGI 2000, INI 2002.*
- 45.4% of the indigenous population (1 in every 2 people) older than 15 did not attend school (the majority are women).

Sources : INEGI 2000, INI 2002

In Guerrero, many people, especially the indigenous, and even moreso women, are unable to exercise their right to an education for many reasons. Poverty forces children to work in order to improve their family's standard of living. In addition, many isolated communities do not have the adequate infrastructure to provide education (lack of classrooms, furniture, books, basic services, and teachers, together with overcrowded classrooms...).

4. - HEALTH

96% of the indigenous population in Guerrero does not have access to health services, due to a lack of hospitals with qualified personnel and basic equipment. The Mountains region has only one general hospital in Tlapa to provide care for 300,500 people from 17 municipalities (with only 3 gynecologists, 2 anesthesiologists and one pediatrician, contracted to cover only one shift); 6 basic community hospitals (without specialists or basic equipment); and 166 health clinics, of which more than half does not have even one general physician (they have only nurses and other less-qualified personnel).

In Guerrero, there are 22 municipalities with high percentages of malnutrition in the population.

The infant mortality rate is particularly high in certain municipalities: in Chilapa (Guerrero, central region, bordering the Mountains region), 89 children die for every 1000 born alive, while in México, the average is 28 and in industrialized countries, 6. Many children die of diseases easily curable in the first world.

Source : UNICEF 2005

The maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the world: in Guerrero, 281 indigenous women die for every 100,000 births. Among all indigenous women in Mexico, the average is 151 and for Mexican women in general, 51.

Lack of medical attention for women in their reproductive years:

- in México, 1 gynecologist attends to 2,414 women in their reproductive years
- in Guerrero, 1 gynecologist attends to 4,132 women
- in the Mountains region of Guerrero, 1 gynecologist attends to 17,654 women (there are 5 gynecologists for 88,277 women)

Forced sterilization: Birth control or a policy of eugenics against indigenous peoples?

In 1998, 14 Tlapaneco men, 18 Mixteco men and 10 Nahuált women were sterilized under pressure by the State Health Department, which engaged in blackmail and deceit, according to the Tlachinollan Mountain Center for Human Rights, A.C.

17% of the human rights abuses against indigenous women which have been documented and denounced by the Tlachinollan Mountain Center for Human Rights are related to the right to health, among them:

- denial of health care
- medical negligence
- forced sterilization

5. LAND

Land: a conflict of visions

The concept of land held by the indigenous peoples is different from that of the mestizo population. The indigenous peoples continue to view the land as whole and sacred ("mother earth"), to be held collectively and not for sale.

In México, ejidos and communal lands have been the dominant form of landholding:

- Ejidos: each ejidatario, member of the ejido, receives a parcel of land and all decisions pertaining to the ejidal land have to be made by the entire assembly of the ejidatarios.
- Communal Lands: the land belongs to all members of the community and, as a result, the benefits of the land are distributed among all members.

In Guerrero, 75% of the total surface area of workable land pertains to these two types of landownership:

- 956,895.94 hectares are ejidal lands
- 239,848.10 hectares are communal lands

The indigenous vision of land is in conflict with another more commercial vision; within the current economic system, the land has been reduced to only its material value and, at various times, has been fragmented by authority of the law. The concept of private property arose and, with it, many agrarian problems.

Source: State Agency for the Development and Autonomy
of the Indigenous Peoples of Guerrero, Tlachinollan A.C., May 2005

Legislation regarding the Land: Fragmentation and Privatization

Collective land ownership has been attacked at many times in Mexican history. At the end of the War for Independence, in 1856, the laws of confiscation prohibited communal ownership, ordered the division of communal lands and authorized the expedition of deeds for private property. In this way, in the Small Coast and Mountains regions, the best lands were monopolized by plantation owners, who purchased supposed land deeds from local caciques (local political bosses), disregarding the rights of communal landholders.

While indigenous people may have managed to recover some of their lands following the Mexican Revolution, the 1992 reform of Article 27 of the constitution again allowed for the privatization of land. PROCEDE (Program of Certification of Ejidal Rights) and PROCECOM (Program of Certification of Communal Rights) were born of this reform.

Many civil organizations have denounced PROCEDE and PROCECOM for creating divisions in communities and ejidos and for spurring the sale and the monopolizing of collective lands. For example, when an ejido accepts PROCEDE, the campesinos can obtain credit, but in exchange they have to use their lands as collateral and, later, if they are unable to repay the loan, they lose their lands. In addition, when they enter into PROCEDE, they have to begin paying property taxes for their plot of land. Therefore, PROCEDE is seen by many as a neoliberal strategy waged against the indigenous community through the privatization of land.

Source: ***YORAIL MAYA #4, June 2002***.

The way in which PROCEDE is "proposed" to people is also widely criticized. From its start in 1993, it was presented as a voluntary program. However, because the period in which all agrarian groups (ejidos, communal lands) are to be incorporated into PROCEDE expires in 2006, everything is being accelerated. The Agrarian Department is accused of attempting to impose PROCEDE on all agrarian groups, pressuring and blackmailing communal and ejidal authorities, so that they take responsibility for informing people about and convincing them of the benefits of the program. In this way, it appears that campesinos are freely choosing to privatize their lands and are therefore assuming responsibility for the consequences. In various places, the program is presented as a requirement for participating in other rural benefit programs, such as PROCAMPO.

In the Nahualt community of Temalacatzingo, in the Mountains region, 1,600 communal landholders joined together to refuse the program three times. They denounced that the government first tried to trick them, threatening them with taking away all of their federal assistance if they did not enter the program, and later, refused to

acknowledge the authority of their agrarian leaders. The communal landholders decided to denounce these pressure tactices to the Tlachinollan Mountain Center for Human Rights. There are many similar cases in the Mountain region of Guerrero.

Sources: State Agency for the Development and Autonomy of the Indigenous Peoples of Guerrero, Tlachinollan A.C., May 2005; State Forum "Our Word Made Path," Tlachinollan, June 3-4, 2005

Agrarian Conflicts

According to the Agrarian Department, there are 45 open land conflicts in Guerrero. Of these conflicts, half are considered "red lights," meaning that there is a strong risk they will result in armed conflict. The state already has a high number of deaths, injuries, displacements and imprisonments due to conflicts over land.

Agrarian conflicts arise for the following reasons:

- a lack of land
- ambiguities and empty legislation regarding land rights and titles dating back decades and even centuries
- Plans for the land which are superimposed on previous plans, caused when agrarian authorities turn in altered documents
- Disagreements over territorial limits
- land monopolies and illegal occupations by cattle farmers and loggers, who have the backing and protection of the authorities
- inadequate response from authorities in the resolution of these conflicts

In the case of the conflict between Zapotitlán Tablas and Acatepec in the Mountains region, strong tensions remain, despite the fact that the federal government compensated the two groups and an agreement was signed to end the agrarian dispute. The Department of Agrarian Reform has begun implementing a strategy which consists of providing financial resources to one of the parties in the conflict, as a means of compensating them for the area of the land seized. These strategies tend to cause more problems: the money corrupts and creates even more divisions, while the underlying conflict remains unresolved. Violence arises when people no longer trust the institutions to resolve the conflict through litigation.

Sources: State Agency for the Development and Autonomy of the Indigenous Peoples of Guerrero, Tlachinollan A.C., May 2005; Against Silence and Oblivion – the tenth newsletter of Tlachinollan A.C. – June 2003/May 2004

6. NATURAL RESOURCES

Guerrero is a state rich in natural resources. In its 63,794 km2 – 3.3% of the total national area, making it the 14th largest state – there are extensive beaches (its shore has an approximate length of 500 km), deposits of minerals and natural materials useful for construction, forests, jungles and abundant hunting and fishing. This is possible due to a complex physical composition, which comprises, among other things, a varied topography, diverse climatic regions, and a variety of rock formations.

Source : SEMARNAT 2005

Water / Hydroelectricity / Electricity

Some of the country's most important rivers are in Guerrero, such as the Balsas River, the Small Coast River and the Big Coast River. These rivers have a large number of dams used for irrigation as well as hydroelectrical dams.

There are six central generators of electrical energy in the state of Guerrero (four hydroelectric ones: La Venta, La Villita, Infiernillo and El Caracol; one gas-powered turbine: Las Cruces; and one thermoelectric: Petacalco). For the year 2000, these generators contributed 9.2% of the country's total electrical production, while only 47.9% of the state had electricity. Guerrero is one of the states, together with Oaxaca and Chiapas, in which the fewest number of residents have electricity in their homes.

Sources: CIEPAC, Chiapas Today, March 10, 2004; INEGI

MIGRATION

Migration is a strong phenomenon: 73,000 Guerrerenses migrate to the United States each year. Compared to other states in Mexico, Guerrero has the highest level of internal migration and is fifth in terms of international migration.

There are two types of migration: agricultural migrant workers who leave their homes for the dry season and long-term migration to the United States.

Seasonal migration during the dry season

- More than 128,000 laborers leave each year to go to states in northern Mexico, such as Sonora, Baja California and Sinaloa, in search of work.

- Other workers leave for the United States, primarily the states of Oregon, California, Arizona, Mississippi, Illinois, Florida, New York, Virginia and North Carolina.

Long-term migration: between one-fourth and one-third of the population of Guerrero actually lives in the United States

- More than 950,000 Guerrerenses reside in the United States, including both the nationalized and the undocumented.
- There are close to 300,000 people from Guerrero in Chicago, making it second only to Acapulco in number of Guerrerenses.

When there are no other options for the indigenous population

73.9% of the municipalities with an indigenous population are unable to provide employment options for their residents (especially for the Nahualt and Mixteco peoples). Source : INI

Because they have neither animals nor plots of land to work, people are left with no alternative but to leave the state in search of employment.

Migrant labor: modern form of slavery?

- In the face of widespread poverty and the inability of the most marginalized families to subsist on their own land, the only solution for many is to work as agricultural day laborers. There is a large population of unemployed agricultural workers, unorganized and vulnerable, willing to work however they can. This population includes children. Many do not know how to read or write, making them the most vulnerable and primary victims of exploitation by plantation owners.

Crossing the border: risks

- Every day, 50 to 60 Guerrerenses attempt to cross the border into the United States. *(Source: Héctor Barenca Martínez, General Director of the Department of Social Development, Attention to Guerrerenses in Other Countries)*
- With the 1994 signing of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and the implementation of "Operation Guardian" in 1995 (in which a wall was built covering 50 km of the border), the risks of migrating have increased, reflected in the growing number of migrants who die in their attempts to cross. However, in spite of

the increasing danger and the rising economic cost, the number of people attempting to cross has not decreased.

Trafficking of the undocumented: a flourishing international industry

Local "coyotes" (traffickers) charge around $2,000 US for taking a person across the border (this does not include the costs of travel to the border), forcing many to enter into debt in order to finance their migration. Trafficking generates networks of corruption with local authorities in addition to the networks of organized crime and mafias.

MILITARISATION

Military presence: official rationale

- The war on drug trafficking: in 2000, the SEDENA (National Department of Defense) dispatched 3,000 troops to fight drug trafficking. 1/6th of active soldiers assigned to combat drug trafficking in Mexico are stationed in Guerrero.
- Federal law regarding weapons and explosives

Military activities in Guerrero (according to human rights organizations)

- Crime investigations
- Persecution of presumed members of armed groups
- Harassment of organized communities

The Tlachinollan Mountain Center for Human Rights has documented 68 cases of human rights abuses committed by the army between 1996 and 2004, including the following:

- Wounds and lesions
- Extrajudicial execution
- Abritrary detention
- Rape
- Abuse of authority
- Illegal extraction of natural resources
- Restriction of freedom of movement
- Sexual harassment
- Obstruction of the work of journalists
- Entering homes without permission

To date, all of these cases are unresolved; no member of the military has been punished for human rights abuses.

DRUG TRAFFICKING

Guerrero is the primary producer of poppies in the country: 60% of the total production in Mexico

When there is no other option for survival:

- Communities are driven to the cultivation of opiates by economic necessity, as the prices of other crops (coffee, corn, hibiscus, beans...) have dropped greatly. Even so, the quality of life has not improved.
- In one hectare, approximately four kilos of poppies can be harvested. In Guerrero, the price for a kilo is 30,000 pesos (or $3,000 US). The closer it gets to the United States, the higher its price; it triples in value once it crosses the border.

Inefficiency of the war against drug trafficking

- According to the Tlachinollan Mountain Center for Human Rights, instead of combating the causes of the cultivation of drugs (poverty), the war on drugs pits itself against indigenous communities.
- The cultivation and trafficking of illegal drugs from South America headed for the United States is a growing problem.

Information source: Sipaz (2008). Guerrero en datos. Sipaz. San Cristobal de las Casas, Sipaz. **2008:** http://www.sipaz.org/data/gro_es_03.htm.

Cronología de los Presidentes Municipales de Xochistlahuaca

Presidente Municipal	Período de Gobierno
Rodolfo Domínguez	1962-1966
Rufino Añove Dávila (interino)	1966- 1968
Felipe Marcial López	1972-1974
Crescencio Aragón Rufino	1975-1977
Josefina Flores García	1977-1980
Eligió Cruz de Jesús	1981-1983
Severiano Diego Herrera de Jesús	1984-1986
Alfonso López Valtierra	1987-1989
Rufino Añorve Dávila	1989-1993
Esaú Torres Vázquez	1993-1996
Marciano Mónico López	1996-1999
Aceadeth Rocha Ramírez	1999-2002
Manuel Castañeda Ramírez	2002-2005
Aceadeth Rocha Ramírez	2005-2008

Fuente: Secretaria de Gobernación, Centro Nacional de Desarrollo Municipal, 2001

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