European University Institute

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Which way to social change *compas*?

Exploring how revolutionary movements form their political strategies through the experiences of the Zapatistas and the Bolivian Cocaleros.

Leonidas Oikonomakis

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences of the European University Institute

Florence, 07 November 2016

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Examining Board

Dr. Donatella Della Porta, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, (former EUI Supervisor)
Dr. Oliver Roy, European University Institute (EUI)
Dr. John Holloway, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP)
Dr. Jeffery R. Webber, Queen Mary University of London

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This thesis has been corrected for linguistic and stylistic errors. I certify that I have checked and approved all language corrections, and that these have not affected the content of this work.

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Declaration

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Abstract

How do revolutionary movements choose what political strategy to follow in their quest for social change? What mechanisms are set in motion in order for the movements to select their political strategy? And when they shift from one strategy to another, why and how does that happen? In my work, I first identify what the options available for social movements that want to bring about (or block) social change are. I have created a model which distinguishes between basically *two different roads* to social change: the one that passes through the seizure of state power (the *state power road*) and the one that avoids any relationship with the state or its functions (the *non-state power road*). The *state power road* also has two *routes*, depending on the means the movements choose in order to grasp state power: the *electoral route* and the *insurgent* one. The *non-state power road* refers to the abstention of any relationship with the state and the engagement with autonomous, prefigurative politics instead.

However, the availability of political strategies is one thing, and the strategy the movements actually decide to follow is another. The former defines the options *available* for the movements. The latter defines the movements' *choice* from those options. Through what mechanisms is that choice made? The relevant literature places most of its attention on the political opportunities (or resources) available to the movements. According to it, when political opportunities are opened the movements are more likely to take the electoral route to state power and social change. When they are closed, as it happens under authoritarian regimes, the armed struggle is a more likely option. However, that has to do with the widening or limiting of the *options available*, and it does not explain *how* the strategic choice is actually made. Comparing the cases of the FLN/EZLN (Mexico) and the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba/MAS (Bolivia), two movements that took completely different paths in their quest for social change despite starting from similar standpoints, I argue that the strategic choice of the movements was made through a combination of a) across time and space resonance of own-or-other experiences at home or abroad, b) in-depth study and –sometimes- active research of the resonating cases, and c) active training of the movements' constituencies to secure the ideological hegemony of the choice made and the discipline of the militants to the selected strategy.

ACRONYMS

APO: *Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca*

ASP*:* Asamblea de los Pueblos

BAEZLN: *Base de Apoyo del EZLN*

BPM: Bloque Parlamentario Minero

CCRI: Comité Clandestino Revolucionario Indígena

CIDOB: Central Indigena del Oriente de Bolivia

COB: Central Obrera Boliviana

COCOPA: Comisión por la Concordia y Pacificación

CSCB: Confederacion Sindical de Colonizadores de Bolivia

CSUTCB: Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia

EIM: Ejército Insurgente Mexicano

EZLN: Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional

EGTK: Ejército Guerillero Tupac Katari

EVLN: Ejército Villista de Liberación Nacional

FEJUVE: Federación de Juntas Vecinales de El Alto

FLN: *Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional*

FNMCB-BS: Federacion Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia- Bartolina Sisa

FSTMB: Federacion Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia

FTE*: Fuerza de Tarea Expedicionaria*

FZLN: Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional

EYOL: Estudiantes y Obreros en Lucha

GPG: *Grupo Popular Guerillero*

IFE: Instituto Federal Electoral

IPSP*:* Instrumento Politicio por la Soberania de los Pueblos

LPP: Ley *de Participación Popular*

MAS: Movimiento al Socialismo

MNR: Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario

NAFTA: North American Free Trade Agreement

NGEZ: *Núcleo Guerillero Emiliano Zapata*

PCB*:* Partido Comunista Boliviano

PdlP: Partido de los Pobres

POR: Partido Obrero Revolucionario

PRI: Partido Revolucionario Institucional

PRD: Partido Revolucionario Democrático

TAZ: Temporary Autonomous Zone

UAM: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana

UMOPAR: Unidad Movil Para el patrullaje Rural

UNACH: Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo

UPE: *Unidad de Policia Ecologica*

Acknowledgements

This journey started with a book.

It must have been in 1998 when, bored at home just before going to my evening high school classes in Heraklion, I bumped on a weird book in my father's library. On the cover it had a masked man with a pipe, and it contained all the Zapatista communiques that had been published until that time translated in Greek. I opened it and that was it. Needless to say that that day, and until I finished the book, I did not do any homework or reading for my high school classes. I was fascinated by those people called Zapatistas and their adventures in that far-away land that I could barely spot on the map. Around 20 years later, I am still studying the writings of those masked men with the same fascination, but Mexico and Chiapas are no longer unknown to me, neither are the Zapatistas themselves. And now I am finishing a PhD thesis that (partly) has those masked men as its topic.

This journey started with a book.

Ten years ago, at the University of Manchester, and while looking for somebody who could supervise an MA thesis on Zapatismo, I had the good fortune to meet Professor Maggie Bolton. She brought to my attention the political processes that were on-going in Bolivia at the time, the country in which herself was conducting fieldwork, and she suggested that I compared the Zapatistas to the cocaleros and the MAS. That is when this thesis started taking form and I owe her big part of the initial idea behind this project.

This journey started with a book.

Over the course of this journey though, as it usually happens with all journeys, I was accompanied and assisted by many people to whom I am deeply indebted.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Donatella della Porta, not just for being the supervisor she has been, but above all for believing in me and for offering me an opportunity at a time when I needed one the most. I hope not to have disappointed her. I would also like to thank John Holloway for having hosted me several times at the *Posgrado* in Puebla during my fieldwork visits to Mexico, as well as for his critical engagement with this thesis. Jeffery Webber, whom I did not know personally but I did know from his work, has also been extremely helpful with his "spot-on" comments and suggestions and I am very glad that he accepted to be in my jury. I am also grateful to Olivier Roy, whose lectures I had the opportunity to attend during my stay at the EUI, and who has been a constant inspiration for me and my old-school ethnographic approach to social and political sciences. I thank them all for their comments, ideas, suggestions, criticisms, and for having accepted to read my work, despite -I am sure- having better things to do with their time. Thanks to them, this is a better thesis.

This journey started with a book.

They say that neither the dream nor the waves can take you where a book can. In my case, the book took me to places as diverse as Italy, Bolivia, and Mexico. Before even setting off though I had a very big challenge to face: to learn *la castilla*, Castilian Spanish that is. Again I was lucky to have three teachers to whom I am deeply grateful: one is a Basque living in Florence, and the other two are Zapatistas in Oventik. When I first came to Florence I could

barely say a few words in Spanish; four years later I was giving a lecture at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM) de Xochimilco in Mexico. This was only possible thanks to Edurne Iraizoz from the *EUI Language Center*, and Efraín and Inés from the *Centro de Español y Lenguas Mayas Rebelde Autónomo Zapatista* (*CELMRAZ*) in Oventik, Chiapas. I am even more grateful because I consider them not just *maestr@s,* but also good friends of mine. I would also like to thank Natalio and Estefania from CELMRAZ for trying to teach me a little bit of Tsotsil, as well as how to play the *himno* Zapatista on the guitar. I have to admit I did much better in Tsotsil.

In Mexico I had the opportunity to make friendships both within and outside the movement, who made my stay there during my several visits in the past five years unforgettable and assisted me -each in his/her own way- with my research. Again, I would like to thank Efraín not only for teaching me his language, but also for the *cafesitos*, *las pastas autónomas, los tacos al pastor*, and of course the eternal discussions about Zapatismo, literature, music, and life in general. *Gracias Maestro*!

The maestr@s of CELMRAZ and the students of the Zapatista boarding secondary school in Oventik, some of whom I watched growing up and becoming *promotores* y *promotoras*, have also shared with me their spaces, their food, and their songs. Football and basketball in Oventik -the few times that it was not raining- were also some of the little things that made my fieldwork even more enjoyable. I am also grateful to the Chol family that hosted me in *las Malvinas* in Zona Norte de Chiapas, and to Gaspar Morquecho in San Cristóbal de las Casas with whom I exchanged big part of the archival material of the FLN that I used in this thesis. Pati, Carmen, and Ceci from Junax were always there to receive me with

open arms every time I would return to San Cristóbal, and I have always been very happy to see them and to share with them the premises of Junax, that became my home in Chiapas. In one of my fieldwork visits I also had the opportunity to get to know Richard Stahler-Sholk, with whom I met, as ethnographers usually do, in the Zapatista caracol of Roberto Barrios. Part of this thesis has been published in a book he co-edited. In DF I was hosted several times by the family of my colleague and friend Francisco -Pancho- Alonso Guillermo and by Thodoris Bitsakis, who made my stay in the Mexico City more enjoyable and less stressful. I would also like to thank Ana Sofia -Sabi- Ortiz for accompanying me in big part of this research. Thanks to her I got more involved with the issues faced by Zapatista women, and of course I learned to recognize which village and region each indigenous Chiapaneca is coming from, just looking at her *huipil*, her traditional dress.

In Bolivia, I was fortunate enough to be hosted by the family of Patricia, Álvaro, Aneliese, and *la abuelita*, who became my *familia Cochabambina*. I also had the good fortune to meet Oscar Olivera, whom I consider a friend, and to be hosted at the *Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios* (CESU) of the University of San Simón of Cochabamba, where I enjoyed the hospitality of Fernando Mayorga and Chalie Crespo. I thank them both for that, and especially Fernando, for the Aurora -*el equipo del Pueblo*-de Cochabamba football games to which he never stopped inviting me. A special reference also has to be made to Thomas Grisaffi, who shared with me several *taquiñas*, stories from his experience in the Chapare, and who took the time to read two Chapters of this thesis and send me his comments, criticisms, and ideas. Of course, a big thank you also goes to Tomás -el papacho- Astelarra, who shared with me big part of my fieldwork in Bolivia, an arrest

and an interrogation by the *leopardos*, much *chicha*, and who conducted with me several of the interviews I used in this thesis.

In Florence now, I was lucky enough to be working at the European University Institute, which provided me with everything I needed in order to complete my thesis. An amazing library to begin with, whose stuff was always readily available to find for me every single book or thesis I needed. I thank them all, and especially Peter Kennely, the SPS Information Specialist, and Alberto Caselli, who was one of the first people I would meet every morning at the Badia. I would also like to thank Adele Battistini for always being readily available to assist me with the administrative requirements of this thesis, and Fatma, Lorenzo, Maria, Michela, and all the people at the EUI Academic Service with whom I was a colleague for a while, when I was seriously running out of money. I am also grateful to all the workers at the EUI mensa, cafeteria, and other EUI facilities, who have also contributed in their own way in the writing of this thesis.

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This journey ends as it started: with a book.

It is dedicated to my maternal grandfather who -without reading any book- “left” for his own long journey while I was writing the conclusions.

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“A revolution starts in the battlefields, but once it gets corrupted, even though military battles are still won, it’s lost. And we’re all to blame. We’ve let ourselves be divided and directed by the lustful, the ambitious, the mediocre. Those who want a real, radical, intransigent revolution are, unfortunately, ignorant, bloody men. And the educated ones only want half a revolution, compatible with the only thing they really want: to do well, to live well, to take the place of Don Porfirio’s elite. That’s Mexico’s drama.”

Carlos Fuentes (Fuentes 2009). The Death of Artemio Cruz.

“On August 10, 1809, while the city of Quito celebrated its liberation, an anonymous hand wrote on a wall: ‘Final day of despotism and first day of the same’.
Two years later in Bogota, Antonio Nariño admitted:
“We have changed masters.””

Eduardo Galeano (2009). Mirrors.

CHAPTER I

“Gentlemen, follow us please…”

CHAPTER I

"Gentlemen, follow us please!"
A welcome to the Chapare…and to this thesis!

September is a very warm month in the Chapare, Bolivia. In the commercial town of Shinahota even more so, when the weather is dry and the usual tropical rainfall of the season is not by any means on the horizon. Together with Argentinean journalist Tomás Astelarra we are interviewing what sounded to us like a contradiction in terms: a Chapareño *cocalero* opposed to Evo Morales.

We met him almost by chance the previous night, while trying to meet up with a *dirigente* of the Six Federations of Coca Producers of the Tropic of Chapare, who –drunk, after a local fiesta - was giving us one failed appointment after another at different towns of the area: Villa Tunari, Shinahota, Lauca Ñ. The appointment – and the interview - with the *dirigente* never took place, however we got to know Don Alejandro and he agreed to meet us the following morning and give us an interview. An interview that was not destined to be completed.

We sat around the table of a nearby *tienda* whose owner had agreed to host us, in the heart of the main street of the town, with our voice-recorders visibly placed on the table and started asking questions. However, about half an hour later the interview was interrupted by the local police:

-*Gentlemen, follow us please. All three of you*!

We were led to the police station of Shinahota and to our protests we were told to wait for the "others" to come. These "others" would allegedly know more about our case and the reasons why we had been summoned; the local policemen were "just following

orders" after all. Then the "others" came, dressed in their green and black uniforms with their rifles in hand. They led us to their jeep and after a short drive we reached their camp. At first, still not familiar with the reality of the Chapare, I thought it was the army that was taking us for interrogation. However, I was soon to realize it was not.

Los Leopardos

"*Leopardos caidos*," read the photograph on the wall, with the faces of the fallen soldiers depicted on it. And there we were, in the camp of the most notorious militarized police force of Bolivia, the UMOPAR, known locally as *leopardos* due to the color of their camouflage uniform and the leopard badge they wear on their arms. And we were soon to be interrogated. What a privileged welcome to the region!

I had read about this force and I knew the atrocities they were responsible for during the years of the *cocalero* resistance: assassinations, tortures, rape. However, I had never imagined I would ever be interrogated by them in their military base in Chimoré[1], the *den* of the *leopardos*. We were placed in different rooms and, after the regular interrogation phase (the good cop/bad cop routine), the General of the camp came in and explained to us the reason why we had been summoned. The official explanation was that we were mistakenly taken for narco-traffickers. Needless to say, narco-traffickers interviewing people, with their voice-recorders on public display and having already informed the local authorities (MAS *dirigentes* and mayors) about their presence in the area is a rather strange species, but that is the only explanation we received.

It would seem that the *leopardos* and the *cocaleros* (those of the Six Federations) are no longer in bad terms with each other. Quite the contrary in fact, the latter are now

[1] Interestingly enough, the military camp in Chimoré used to be the old DEA compound in the past, and the new Chapare international airport today.

controlling and directing the former through their political instrument the MAS, which is now governing both Bolivia and the Chapare

"We are no longer enemies with the *leopardos*," I was told by a cocalero *dirigente* during my fieldwork there, "now, we work together."

Some years ago however, the *cocaleros* were considering starting a rebellion in the Chapare and the *leopardos* were –ironically enough- sent there to control them.

How and why did the *cocaleros* decide to abandon their plans for rebellion and opt instead for the conquest of state power through parliamentary means? What factors interacted when these decisions were taken? And, more generally, how do revolutionary social movements decide which "road" to social change to follow and which to reject? These are the questions that led me to the Chapare to investigate the political strategies of the Six Federations of Coca Producers of the Tropic of Cochabamba. The same questions led me to Chiapas, Mexico, to investigate the political strategies of a not too different social movement, which had however taken a very different "road" to social change, the Zapatistas and their EZLN.

The Zapatista movement has its base in a region not too different to that of the Chapare. Chiapas was equally excluded, both geographically and politically, from the centers of power in Mexico as the Chapare was in Bolivia. Situated at a location rich in mountains, rivers, and tropical vegetation, the population of Chiapas (largely indigenous, just like that of the Chapare) has always been excluded from the provision of social services and was relatively ignored in political terms. In addition, Chiapas –like the Chapare- was considered the ideal location for the formation of a rebel movement by the revolutionary vanguards of the era. Such a rebel movement did indeed emerge in Chiapas, while in the Chapare –against all the odds- it did not. Furthermore, however strange it may sound, the rebel movement that appeared in Chiapas originally claimed inclusion to the state through the grasp of state power, before demanding autonomy from it later on. On the other hand,

the *cocaleros* of the Six Federations originally enjoyed a rather autonomous existence and self-organization in the Chapare, before opting to take state power through the ballot box later on.

What accounts for the different initial political strategies of these movements? And when those strategies changed, what accounts for their changes? What processes, mechanisms, and factors interacted when those decisions were taken? And finally, how, and through what mechanisms do social movements decide which "road" to social change to follow and which to reject? And when they shift from one to another, why do they do so?

To answer these questions I set off on the journey of this doctorate research. What I came across is written in the pages that follow.

Thesis Overview

Before moving on to my empirical findings, I believe I should start this journey by exploring what the relevant theory suggests regarding my central question: how movements select what political strategy, what "road", to social change to adopt and follow? Of course, even before doing so I consider it highly important to explore and analyze what "options" they have to choose from. Therefore, in Chapter II, studying the work of several theorists preoccupied with social change and how it can be achieved (James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, John Holloway, Raúl Zibechi, Jack Goldstone, John Gledhill), I distinguish between two possible "roads" the movements can choose from: the state power and the non-state power ones. The latter is mostly related to John Holloway's *power to do*, what we could describe as self-emancipation from below, and does not target the conquest of state power. The former –obviously- targets the conquest and control of the state apparatus. However, it consists of two routes depending on the way in which the movements decide to take power: the insurgent, and the electoral route. Apart from

analyzing what each road and each route to social change involves, in Chapter II I also try to provide an outlook of what the theory suggests regarding my main research questions: How do movements decide their political strategy towards social change? And when they shift from one to another, why do they do so?

Chapter III is methodological, while in Chapters IV and V, I thoroughly present and analyze one of my two case studies: the FLN/EZLN and their choice of political strategy. Chapter IV provides a historical analysis of the emergence of the FLN/EZLN, in the context from which it emerged, based on political ethnographic fieldwork I have conducted in Chiapas over the past four years. This is supported by a content analysis of until recently unknown organizational documents of the FLN, as well as on relatively unknown academic works on the movement that have not been so far analyzed in the relevant bibliography. In Chapter V, based on the same sources as well as on information and internal organizational documents that were passed on to me during my fieldwork in Chiapas, I investigate how the FLN/EZLN chose their (insurgent) road to social change, and when they decided to make a (non-state power) strategy shift why they did so. How and why did the FLN of the '60s decide to form a revolutionary vanguard movement that was destined to lead the guerilla war in Mexico? And how did that vanguard organization transform itself into and what we know today as the EZLN?

Chapter VI narrates the story of the Six Federation of Coca Producers of the Tropic of Cochabamba, the *cocaleros* of the Chapare, Bolivia. Based on internal documents, bibliographical analysis, and interviews with the movement's *dirigentes* and members, I attempt to reconstruct how they ended up producing coca leaves in the Chapareño Tropics, how they first self-organized in a rather autonomous manner to provide for and by themselves basic social services such as transportation, education, and health; as well as why and how they decided to organize themselves in the form of a political party and fight in the electoral arena for the conquest of local and national power. From the interviews it also emerges that the Chapareño cocaleros were–at one point- even

considering starting a guerilla warfare, before opting for the political party organization, something which is not very much explored in the relevant literature. This is an aspect that I analyze in Chapter VII of this thesis.

Finally, in the concluding chapter of this thesis, Chapter VIII, I will attempt to provide answers to my initial research questions, based on the experience of the two movements I have studied, while all the while endeavoring to remain in constant dialogue with the relevant theory, hopefully adding my own -however small- contribution to it.

CHAPTER II
Which way to social change *compas*?

CHAPTER II

“WHICH WAY TO SOCIAL CHANGE *COMPAS*?”

Choices

Social Movements make choices. Yet “…*you would never know this from the scholarly literature*” (Jasper, 2004).

Nor would you ever know where these choices come from, or through what processes and mechanisms they are formed. Indifferent of how broadly or strictly we define them, a characteristic that social movements always share is that they “…*are engaged in cultural and/or political conflicts, meant to promote or oppose social change*” (della Porta and Diani, 2006:21). Therefore, one of the most crucial choices they have to make, one that characterizes their struggle, is which *road* to social change to follow.

When it comes to *revolutionary movements*, that subcategory of social movements that “advance exclusive competing claims to control of the state, or some segment of it” (Goodwin, 2001,10, citing Tilly 1993, 10); building on the work of Petras and Veltmeyer (2005, 2009, 2011), Poulantzas (1978), Holloway (2002, 2005), Goodwin (2001), Foran (2002), Wickham-Crowley (1993), Bookchin (1995), Stahler-Sholk (Stahler-Sholk 2001; 2011; 2007), and Zibechi (2010), I identify two *roads*[2] to social change that they have to choose from: The “state power” and the “non-state power” ones.

[2] For reasons of clarification, in this research proposal two *roads* to social change will be referred to: those of “State power” and of “non-state power”. The “state power” road, however, consists of two different *routes* that lead to the same destination: the *electoral* and the *insurgent*. Petras and Veltmeyer in their theoretical model, prefer to define three different *roads* to social change: the parliamentary, the revolutionary, and the no-power.

The former, consists of two different *routes*, which lead to the same destination: the conquest of state power; the power to control the state apparatus. These *routes* are; i) the *electoral route*, which involves the participation in electoral politics and parliamentary processes (the *parliamentary* route according to Petras and Veltmeyer) and ii) the *insurgent route*, which involves the seizure of state power in an "irregular, extra-constituent, and/or violent fashion (Goodwin, 2001:8)" ("the mobilization of the forces of resistance and opposition to the state," according to Petras and Veltmeyer). Sometimes, revolutions –called social revolutions in those cases- do not only claim the taking of state power, but rather get involved in a social, cultural, and political transformation of the state immediately thereafter. Of course revolutionary movements may also choose to combine those strategies in a dual-power fashion.

The non-state power road, on the other hand, targets bringing about social change, again within a certain territory but without the control of state power, usually through the participation in the politics of autonomous self-governance outside the realm (yet inside the territory) of the state (the *no power* road of Holloway). That latter option additionally involves the creation of *new* organizational and administrative structures (not just the taking of those already existing through the state), by the movements themselves; structures that are horizontal, directly democratic, and are built in a communitarian fashion from below.

Of course, as Goodwin (2001:10) notes, there is no clear thin line between *social* and *revolutionary* movements. At certain times, social movements may turn revolutionary, while at other times revolutionary movements may transform themselves into more reform-oriented social movements -or even parties- in their quest for social change. However, what is certain is that whether this is exercised through the state or not, "…*the*

I, however, prefer to call the first two "routes" and not "roads", because in my theoretical model they belong to the same "road": the *state power* one. Therefore, for the needs of this research project, whenever I use the term "roads" to social change I will be referring to the "state power" and "non-state power" ones, while whenever I use the term "routes", I will be referring to the *electoral* and the *insurgent*, which both constitute diversions of the "state power" *road*.

path towards social change is paved with political power" (Petras and Veltmeyer 2005: 226).

Social -including revolutionary- movements also change their choices. No matter what political strategy they initially decide to follow, it so very often happens that movements make strategy shifts, moving from one *road* to social change to another; and even from one *route* within the same *road*, to another.

In defining revolutionary movements and revolutions, the author of this thesis finds extremely useful the distinction that John Holloway makes between Revolutions with capital and small *R*. In this sense, *Revolution* (with capital *R*) refers to the political event of the conquest of state power through irregular and -usually- violent means, an event that -if successful-necessarily leads to regime change but not necessarily to radical social transformations within the social structure of the country or region in which it occurs. On the other hand, *revolution* (with small *r*) is "humbler"; it refers to the gradual social transformation within a given society; a transformation that does not necessarily pass through the conquest of state power and the political event of the Revolution (with capital R), neither is it necessarily *rapid*, as Skocpol, Huntington, and Goodwin describe it (Skocpol 1979; Goodwin 2001a, Huntington 1968, cited in Foran 2005). Radical social transformations can also be gradual, slow, processes that have to do more with a shift in the socio-political consciousness and culture of the people, and that do not happen neither overnight nor as a result of regime change only.

Therefore, for the needs of this thesis, whenever I am referring to the insurgent route to state power I will be referring to Revolutions (with capital R), which bring about regime change but not necessarily social transformations. When, on the other hand, I am referring to the non-state power I will be referring to revolutions (with small *r*), which bring about gradual social transformations, not necessarily through the conquest of state power. Revolutionary movements now, are for this thesis understood as social movements that do make claims to the control of the state or a segment of it, as Tilly (1993,10) and later on Goodwin (2001,10) have put it; and target to bring about rapid or gradual social transformations to the social structure within the territory they wish to control, either

through the grasp of state power or without it. Revolutionary movements can therefore try to lead *Revolutions* (through the insurgent route of the state power road of my typology), or try to bring about *revolutions* (through the electoral route of the state power road, or through the non-state power road).

While the author of this thesis does not believe that long-lasting, emancipatory social change can ever be imposed from the above, from any of the routes of the state power road, I however include both routes in my typology of political choices since they have both been very prominent in the revolutionary imaginary of movements, theorists, and activists alike all over the globe over the course of history, and keep doing so. In addition, this thesis is about the mechanisms through which the movements under study formed their political strategies, and not about which political strategy this author prefers and why. That could very well be the topic of another work, dedicated to that question only.

Black Box

But how do revolutionary movements really decide what *road* to social change to follow? And what *route*? Why do they prefer one over another? And when they decide to change road or route, and shift from one to another, why do they do so? And through what mechanisms does that change occur? When it comes to the aforementioned questions, in the relevant theory there is what we could term as a "black box". While the relevant literature has largely focused on **when** movements are more likely to mobilize, and **what repertoires** of mobilization they are more likely to adopt once they do so, we have not placed adequate emphasis on what happens **in between**: on the *mechanisms* through which the political strategies of the movements are decided upon.

In attempting to provide answers to the questions above I am going to compare the experiences of two revolutionary movements that have ultimately followed the "state power" and "non-state power" *roads* to social change, in an effort to locate for what

reasons and through what processes those choices were made. I will do so by exploring the experiences of the Bolivian *Cocaleros*[3], and the Mexican *Zapatistas*[4], which have been chosen as case-studies for this research precisely due to the different political strategies they have adopted: in the case of the *Cocaleros*, that of participating in electoral politics (the electoral *route* of the state power road), while in that of the *Zapatistas*, abstaining from any relationship with the state and implementing their own version of autonomous self-governance instead (the non-state power road).

In addition, since both of the movements I am examining have experimented with different political strategies in the past and have at some point shifted from one to another (the *cocaleros* have shifted from autonomous self-governance to electoral politics – from the *non-state power* to the *state-power* road; while the Zapatistas from armed struggle to autonomous local self-governance - from the *insurgent route* of the *state power road*, to the *non-state power road*) I consider it particularly interesting to try and understand what instigated those strategy shifts.

Research Questions

More specifically, my research evolves around two main questions that seem very basic, and indeed are exactly that: fundamental for the mobilization of revolutionary movement activists and for the movements' establishment and survival. The first question of my research is probably one of the very first questions the movements themselves have to answer:

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[3] In fact, all the coca producers of the Chapare (and Bolivia) are called *cocaleros*. However, my research focuses on the experience of the *Seis Federaciones del Trópico de Cochabamba*, who may not be the only *cocalero* organization in the Chapare (there are also those of the Yungas of Vadiola for example) or the country, but for reasons of brevity whenever I use the term *cocaleros* in this thesis I will be referring to those of the *Seis Federaciones* unless otherwise stated.

[4] Or the Neo-Zapatistas as would be more correct to refer to them as, since the original Zapatistas were actually the followers of Emiliano Zapata during the Mexican Revolution.

How do revolutionary movements decide which political strategy, which *road* to social change, to adopt and follow? What mechanisms are in play for this decision to be taken?

Is the selection of which road to social change to follow based on the movement's ideological positioning? And, consequently, is it based on path-dependent adaptation[5]? And what is the role of historical examples in the decision making process? Do movements study similar revolutionary/electoral/autonomous experiences from their own country or others? From the contemporary period, or from the near, or distant past? Are they influenced by the resonance of other struggles at home or elsewhere? Ideology, as Downey (1986) argues, can provide the "interpretive framework" through which resources and political strategies can be assessed, judged, and found to be legitimate or not with the movements ideological identity. Path dependence, in this case, is related to culture[6] and past historical experience. Through my research, which is oriented towards theory building rather than testing, I will try to abductively reconstruct the way in which cultural, historical, and ideological dimensions interact, producing a movement's choice of political strategy.

My second research question is related to the shift in political strategy that movements often decide to make. Sometimes the change is from the *road* targeting state power to that of non-state power, while other times it is from one *route* of the state power road to another (from the insurgent *route* to the electoral one, or vice versa):

[5] As Kathleen Blee (2012) explains, "events tend to cascade over time as actions shape options for later action."

[6] According to Kathleen Blee (ibid.), culture plays a crucial role in decision making, since it "shapes" the perceived "horizon of possibility".

When revolutionary movements decide to make a shift in their political strategy, in their *road* or *route* to social change, why do they do so? And through what mechanisms does that shift occur?

Is the strategy shift a reflection of a change in the movements' political ideology, either due to the leadership takeover by a younger generation (internal competition), an empowerment of a specific group within the movements, or due to the disregard of their previous ideology locally or internationally? Is it a product of a perception of "lack of favorable conditions"? Is it a response to a change in the movement's political environment, openness or closure, during which certain targets (ends) either get "blocked" or become more "approachable", requiring an adjustment of the means to their ends to take place in order for the movements to make the "scale shift" (Tarrow and McAdam, 2003) to a higher or a lower level?

Surprisingly enough, even though the aforementioned questions are fundamental for any social movement, the relevant literature has not been particularly preoccupied with them. They are part of the black box I mentioned earlier. My research intends to explore what happens inside that black box.

Typology of political choices

The relationship between social movements and the state or its functions has traditionally been viewed with particular suspicion in the relevant literature, as well as in the praxis of the movements themselves and the state respectively. It is believed that political parties and social movements might have partly complementary (at best) but ultimately conflicting agendas (Munck, cited in Foweraker 1995: 84). In addition, it has been argued that political parties and social movements represent two different logics: the former *that of representation*, while the latter *that of belonging* (or even that of *not belonging* to conventional political processes). After all, quite often state policies have

brought about those changes in the society which led to the creation of those social movements that sought to reverse them, as Petras and Veltmeyer (2002:60) argue, giving the examples of NAFTA regarding Mexico (which was the trigger for the launching of the uprising by the EZLN) and the "*hunt*" against coca production in Bolivia (which eventually led to the creation of the MAS, the political branch of the Six Federations of Coca Producers of the Chapare). In addition it is widely believed that direct actions can be more effective than interference with conventional politics (Petras 2005) and that electoral politics constitute a "*trap for social movements*", as Petras and Veltmeyer write (2005: 227). This is due to the fact that social movements are believed to become institutionalized and bureaucratized (Gledhill 2000) when they interfere with the *political game* of elections.

On the other hand, there are theorists who argue that every movement marks and is marked by its political environment in any case. Therefore since social movements are inevitably political, they have to participate in political processes and develop some kind of political project if they are to prosper (Foweraker 1995) -or simply survive (Glen, in Goldstone, 2003). Or, as Gledhill notes (2000:196), the relationship with the state should -at least- not be rejected. It is also argued that despite the problems and shifts that the dominant neoliberal economic paradigm has brought about in contemporary societies, contemporaneously –at times- it has also (due to the retreat of the nation-state as the highest territorial authority in favour of transnational companies (Stahler-Sholk 2001)) left vacant the necessary political space for social movements to emerge, mobilize and develop. A political space that would not be open under an oppressive military regime, for example[7]. It is believed therefore that social movements should "occupy" that political space and participate in conventional politics, because through politics they can bring about real social change. Goldstone (2003:4) adds:

[7] It should be noted here that at times, especially in its beginnings in Chile in the 1970s for example, neoliberalism has actually been implemented by dictatorships. On other occasions, Bolivia in the 1990s for example, "democratically elected governments" have also been particularly oppressive in order to implement neoliberal measures.

"The stance taken by institutionalised parties toward social movements issues often determines the approach and fate of social movements; in return, the support or lack of support given by social movements to political parties can determine the latters' electoral success."

The relationship between movements and states however is a two-way one. Just as movements can affect an electoral result through their mobilization and force governments and presidents to fall, just like has happened in Ecuador, Argentina, and Bolivia in the early 2000s, so too government actions can also influence –even change- movement strategies. For example, as Guillermo Trejo (2012) argues referring to autocratic regimes[8], governments sometimes use the strategy of "(partial) carrots and (moderate) sticks" (ibid, 46) to manage dissent. This is to partially satisfy (some) of the movements' demands, and repress other movements, whose demands cannot be satisfied, or that cannot be co-opted. In this way, the movements in general do not opt for violent reactions, and sometimes their leaders even get co-opted. However, if the government opts for a violent repressive reaction instead, movements are also expected to opt for more revolutionary and violent strategies. The same is true- argues Trejo- when a political party (usually of the left) rides on the waves of protest raised by popular movements, even offering them parliamentary support. When the party does rise to a position of power, however, and feels obliged to moderate its positions in order to appeal to the middle classes, it is also very possible that it will turn to the "partial carrots and moderate sticks" policy.

In what follows, I will try to present and analyze the "state power" and the "non-state power" roads to social change, as they are presented in the relevant theoretical debate.

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[8] Autocracies, in Trejo's terms, are societies ruled by a single party, in which partly fair elections (open/electoral autocracies) may or may not (closed autocracy) be regularly taking place.

A) The State Power Road

The *state power road* to social change refers to the effort by the movements to bring about social change through the conquest of state power- with the state being defined as "the set of organizations involved in making and implementing binding collective decisions, if necessary by force" (Ruschemeyer et al., 1992:6). Of course, in a capitalist world in which transnational capital can move beyond borders and at times "force" even elected governments in one direction or another (take the case of Greece 2015 for example), even the state power road has proven to have its own limits. In this sense it is questionable whether even elected governments actually have full political power within a given territory, even though they control the state apparatus. However, that is a question that is usually dealt with *after* taking state power first, and was not as visible as it is today when the movements I am examining were forming their initial political strategies.

For much of the last century, the debate on social change through the state was dominated by the dilemma of *reform* or *Revolution* (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2009:40; Holloway, 2002:11). "Reform was a gradual transition to socialism, to be achieved by winning elections and introducing change by parliamentary means; revolution was a much more rapid transition, to be achieved by the taking of state power and the quick introduction of radical change by the new state." (Holloway, 2002:11) Yet the debate over reform or Revolution is not concerned only with the indirect or direct form of taking state power and introducing social change. It is much more than that; involving the structural characteristics of each option that eventually the movements are forced to adapt to. On the one hand, control over the state apparatus seems to be a very powerful tool to bring about social change. On the other hand, this process may involve a certain level of cooperation with what is called "the political class", perhaps the bureaucratization and institutionalization of the movement, maybe even corruption. It necessarily also includes taking decisions on behalf of the community, running the risk that Holloway describes as "a process of substitution": with the state and its powerful apparatus substituting itself for the community. The argument against the *state power road* is that it exactly reproduces

power and domination over the general population, exchanging one form of domination with another. As Holloway puts it: "…if we manage to become powerful, by building a party, or taking up arms, or winning an election, then we shall be no different from all the other powerful in history." (Holloway, 2002:10)

The debate is of course theoretical, however, it does have practical effects. For years, for example, the political imaginary of the left in Latin America and elsewhere was dominated by the Cuban –and later on by the Sandinista- Revolution. Numerous rebels took to the mountains and jungles (or even the cities) of their countries, loyal to the *foco guerillero*, or the *prolonged peoples war* strategies, and believing they would bring about social change through the violent seizure of state power. Allende and his electoral success also had an incredible impact around the world, and –despite the eventual fate of the *Unidad Popular* government- numerous leftist parties believed that they could possibly change the world from within the political system, playing by the rules it has established for itself. The more horizontal and autonomous experiences of the Zapatista communities also inspired similarly oriented movements around the world, with the Coordinadora por la Defensa del Agua y la Vida of Cochabamba and the occupied factories and popular assemblies in Argentina and Greece being some exemplary cases.

What follows is an analysis of the two routes the *state power road* to social change can involve: the *electoral* and the *insurgent* ones.

a1 The Electoral Route

The *electoral route* is one of the two possible *routes* to state power. It involves direct or indirect participation in electoral politics through the establishment of a political party, the official participation in a political coalition, or the simple support for a political party or coalition. The idea behind it is to try and change the socio-political system "from within". In short, the electoral route to state power is the one obeying to the rules set by the institution themselves. James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer describe the electoral route

as a game played with the rules which have been set up by the political class (2005), preferred for that reason by devotees of liberal representative democracy (2009), precisely "…because it is predicated on limited political reforms to the existing system rather than mass mobilisation of the forces of social transformation" (2011).

While it is possible that by choosing the *electoral route* a movement will find it easier to attract allies from "within" the political class than it would be through the *insurgent* one (Boudreau, 2004:33), it is also true that by participating in electoral politics movements will have to make concessions, compromises and alliances with parties of the Centre or even the Right, limiting their capacity to reform the state apparatus. "The modus operandi," explain Petras and Veltmeyer (2009:217), "involves constant engagement with the business and banking elite, bourgeois political leaders, power brokers- all of which draw the centre left politicians closer to the capitalist class and distance them from the mass movements." For Petras and Veltmeyer, electoral politics deflect the popular movements from more radical struggles, such as urban uprisings, land occupations and general strikes- and this is why they constitute a *trap* for social movements. It must be noted that for them this is not a "betrayal", as it is usually described. It is just the result of the institutional nature of electoral politics and capitalist representative institutions that eventually produce a "re-socialisation" process that brings the movement leaders on the same side as the ruling classes. John Holloway also seems to agree with them –and it is one of the few cases this happens- when he says that "to struggle through the state is to become involved in the active process of defeating yourself" (Holloway, 2002:214). Nicos Poulantzas (1978), while advocating for a democratic road to socialism, also argues that participation in electoral politics is not enough, unless it is combined with popular struggle and parallel popular organization from below. Otherwise, even in the fortunate case of an electoral triumph of the left, it will eventually lead either to techno-bureaucratic statism of the experts (social democracy), or even worse, to *authoritarian –Stalinist- statism* of the party.

Guillermo Trejo (2012) on the other hand, referring to autocratic regimes, and Robertson (2010), referring to "hybrid" ones, argue that it can also be possible for political parties of the left to support social movements and their causes, riding on the wave of protest the latter lead, in the hope of overturning governments and their policies. Once the parties reach the seat of government, however, it is not uncommon for them to moderate their positions and to attempt to manipulate the movements through (partial or full) co-optation, or/and (partial or full) repression.

a2 The Insurgent Route

The *insurgent route* leads to the same destination as the *electoral* one, the control over the state apparatus, although through different means: irregular, at times illegal, and often extra-constitutional. Petras and Veltmeyer describe this process as the mobilisation of the forces of resistance and political opposition, which unavoidably pitches the movements *against* the state, this time in a confrontational way, avoiding the slow process and the necessary concession making of the *electoral* route. According to Theda Skocpol, "social revolutions are rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below…What is unique to social revolution is that basic changes in social structure and in political structure occur together in a mutually reinforcing fashion. And these changes occur through intense socio-political conflicts in which class struggles play a key role"(Skocpol 1979, 4). Samuel Huntington also agrees that revolutions are "rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and governmental activity and policies" (cited in Foran 2005, 6). Goodwin (2001:8) provides two definitions of revolution: one that is related to regime change through popular mobilization that takes irregular, extra-constitutional, and/or violent means; and one that is also accompanied by rapid social, political, economic, and cultural transformation of the state as well. The latter is performed by what he calls *radical revolutionary movements*. For Foran (2005) successful

revolutions are the ones who come to power and hold it long enough to initiate a process of deep structural transformation. Therefore, what distinguishes revolutions from uprisings, rebellions, and insurgencies, is the fact that the latter may also be violent but do not necessarily however bring about changes in the regime and/or the social structure of the place or country where they occur. Through the *insurgent* route, revolutionary movements are considered to find it easier to implement radical reforms that bring about radical social change to their societies, and it is the *route* that Petras and Veltmeyer seem to opt for (they call it *revolutionary road*, in their theoretical model). In Latin America, this strategy is known as *la via armada*, and it has mainly been expressed through two sub-strategies:

-that of *foquismo*, or *foco guerillero*, which derives from Che Guevara's (Guevara 1961) practice and Régis Debray's (1966) theorisation of it: that a well-organized small vanguardist commando group can actually start the revolution and by its actions create the conditions for it to succeed, and

-that of the prolonged people's war, which is a Maoist concept that involves the long preparation of the population in the countryside, having as its focus the *campesino* populations, which can prepare and feed with both people and resources a rebel army that can fight and eventually beat the state's military and grasp state power.

As Wickham-Crowley (1993) emphasizes, the first sub-strategy was the one preferred by the Latin American guerrillas of the first wave (1960s) influenced by the success of the Cuban revolution. Due to the limited success it had afterwards though, the second wave (1970s and 1980s) of Latin American revolutionaries -through trial and error- eventually came to criticize *foquismo*, reformulated their position towards it, and advocated the prolonged popular war instead (ibid., 313).

Yet, this option has also been criticised for having its own pitfalls. Revolutionary movements, according to Holloway (2002), constitute yet another way of reproducing power within the revolution itself, since they usually construct a mirror image of the power

they oppose: army against army, party against party. And by adapting to the means of the enemy, their revolution runs the risk of becoming "…a revolution on behalf of, a revolution led by an elite which would do nothing more than lead to a restructuring of class domination" (ibid). This is so even in the fortunate event of a successful revolution. Or, as Bookchin puts it, if history has taught us anything, it is that power corrupts, and this has happened in the great French, Russian, and Spanish Revolutions. Therefore, "to pursue state power -or to "Seize" it, to use the language of traditional radicalism- is to guarantee that it will persist as a form of elitist manipulation and be brutally exercised as an instrument against popular democracy" (Bookchin 1995, 11). It is the same argument that Michels (1999) had made in his *Iron Law of Oligarchy*; that in fact any political organization, such as a party or a government for example, no matter how democratically-oriented it may be, at some point develops its own oligarchic elitist hierarchy that dominates over the rest of its structure.

In addition, and this is what Petras and Veltmeyer seem to miss, it is a fact that even revolutionary movements can negotiate with the dominant regimes, making concessions and compromises, especially when a military triumph is not possible. The work of Elisabeth Wood on El Salvador and South Africa is particularly illuminating on this:

"…insurgents would accept political inclusion at the cost of economic moderation (principally a commitment to economic liberalism), while economic elites gained constitutional protection of the status quo distribution of wealth in return for accepting electoral and other forms of democratic competition as the terrain on which they would henceforth pursue their interests." (Wood, 2000:6)

The author of this thesis considers a Revolution (with capital r) the political event of the seiqure of state power through irregular and -usually- violent means, an event that necessarily leads to regime change but not necessarily to radical transformations within the social structure of the country in which it occurs. Those transformations are understood as revolutions (with small *r*); and from the point of you of the author do not necessarily pass through the seizure of state power through the political event of the

Revolution (with capital R), nor are they necessarily rapid, as Skocpol, Huntington, and Goodwin describe it.

B) The Non-state Power Road

The "non-state power" road is a concept that has been brought (back) to the forefront of sociology and political science relatively recently and refers to the process of bringing about social change without conquering state power.

The idea is for the poor and disadvantaged to be self-empowered from below in their local spaces, in an emancipatory, autonomous, self-managed way. Holloway, in his *Change the World Without Taking Power* (2002), describes this "no-power[9]" road (as he calls it) as the movement of *power-to* (in contrast to the *power-over* of the "state power" road), a movement towards emancipating human potential. It is still practiced by revolutionary movements that do make claims to territory, to the state or segments of it (from communities, villages, cities, to even neighbourhoods within cities), and it also has socially, culturally, and politically, transformative aspects. However, it does not aim to conquest already existing state structures, but rather to create new ones from below in a prefigurative manner. It is a road to social change that does not cling to any theoretical dogma, rather it follows the Zapatista anti-strategy (as John Holloway would put it) of *caminamos preguntando*: "It is rather a movement outwards, a path that is made in the process of walking- walking in the dark, guided only by the light provided by the utopian star of our projection" (Holloway, 2002: 221), rejecting both revolutionary vanguardism and state-oriented reformism. The non-state power road also rejects the political party as an organizational form, on the grounds that it is a necessarily state-oriented form of organization; and instead gives preference to autonomy and councilism –which it sees as a horizontal form of decision-making that encourages free participation with the aim of

[9] This road to social change is usually described in the relevant literature as the "no power" road (Holloway, 2002; Petras and Veltmeyer, 2005, 2009, 2011). In my theoretical model though, I prefer to call it "non-state power" road, since it may not be leading to the conquest of *state power* (control over the state apparatus), yet it does lead to one or another form of *political power*. To put it in Holloway's terms, it may or may not lead to the *power-over*, but it certainly leads to the *power-to*.

reaching consensus in its decisions (Holloway, 2005). In addition, as Katsiaficas adds, the goal of autonomous movements is "to transcend nation states, not to capture them."(Katsiaficas 1997, 196) Ana Dinerstein (2014) defines autonomy as "the art of organizing hope" in a prefigurative manner, without necessarily having a detailed future vision of the society as a whole, "seeing it" ,however, on the horizon. One could argue that the non-state power road is closer to anarchism, since in its theory and practice the "means" are considered equally important –if not characteristic of- as "the ends" when we are talking about emancipatory social change.

It is the kind of communitarian political approach that has been practiced in the *ayllus* of the Aymaran Altiplano in Bolivia (Zibechi 2010) or in the Argentinean neighbourhood assemblies (Dinersten, 2014), by some of the piquetero movements , and by the recuperated factories (Sitrin 2006). Its theory and practice can be very well summarised in what the Bolivian Coordinadora Por la Defensa del Agua y la Vida, in the year 2000, described as follows: "It is not about making a small room in their house, it is about constructing a whole new house.[10]" (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008, 51)

Yet this road to social change is not one that escapes criticism either. According to James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, this road to social change serves one -and only one- purpose: to deflect the masses from challenging the existing structures, by helping them to learn how to survive within them: "Rather than directly confronting this structure in an effort to change the existing distribution of power, the aim, in effect, is to empower the poor without having to disempower the rich" (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2011:5). This is exactly the reason why, they argue, states and big international organizations (the World Bank for example) have been very favourable to this idea and usually cooperate with like-minded NGOs. In addition, this whole process is viewed as an effort by certain governments to transfer formerly state responsibilities to the citizens and the civil society, the so-called third sector. However, as Asef Bayat notes, "…at the same time governments display apprehension about losing political space." (Bayat, 1997:12). Hakim Bey, in his Temporary

[10] Author's translation from the Spanish language.

Autonomous Zone (TAZ), adds a warning: Such autonomous non-state power experiences cannot last long. Eventually, the state will crush or co-opt them, therefore what the TAZ has to do is to sense it before that happens and to "dissolve itself elsewhere/elsewhen before the state crushes it." (Bey 1997) Richard Stahler-Sholk (2007) also warns against the pitfalls of the three different models of autonomy he identifies: a) that of "autonomy defined as mere decentralization," which runs the risk of simply replacing the central-power structures with regional ones, b) that of "autonomy without resources", which involves the liberalization of the local resources, leaving the space open for transational capital to exploit them, and c) the neoliberal "multiculturalism trap" which recognizes multiple (indigenous) identities but not their collective rights. In short we could argue that Stahler-Sholk is warning against models of autonomy that are strictly political (decentralization), strictly economical (liberalization), or strictly cultural (identity recognition), without being all-encompassing.

Although, Petras and Veltmeyer may be right in their assertion that the action of NGOs may be holding the masses away from more radical action, they fail to recognise the fact that some social movements have also adopted this strategy of "non-state power", staying away from any relationship with the state or international organizations, and relying only on their own powers and that of the global civil society, with the Zapatistas constituting the most prominent example.

Dual Power

Recently, with the rise of left-of-centre parties to political power in several Latin American countries (Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, Nicaragua, Uruguay) another idea related to the relationship between the movements and the state has also been revived, one that combines electoral and non-electoral action: that of dual-power (Lenin 1917; Trotsky 1930). Dual power (dual sovereignty-*dvoevlasty* in the Russian original, or multiple sovereignty in Tilly's (1978) term), is, according to Lenin and Trotsky,

a condition that appears in what they describe as “revolutionary epochs” under which an antagonist to the state “constituent” power is formed from below, “a power directly based on revolutionary seizure, on the direct initiative of the people from below, and not on a law enacted by a centralised state power” (Lenin 1917, n.p.). This dual power condition is viewed as temporary by Lenin and Trotsky. According to them, the rising people’s power is expected to completely take over the state apparatus, through a vanguard party that will establish a dictatorship of the proletariat, and after an indefinite period of time will dissolve the state in order to create the classless, stateless society that Karl Marx had imagined as the ultimate goal of communism. If we now turn to anarchist thought, dual power is again a temporary phase which, however, plays out the other way round: the rising people’s power eventually develops its own the autonomous, self-governing structures that will replace the state, which will eventually wither away. In the anarchist resolution of the “dual power problem” there is no vanguard party and no dictatorship of the proletariat phase, precisely because it is viewed as reproducing the same power relations that existed before, with the vanguard communist party in power this time.

For Nicos Poulantzas, what should be the actual target of the left is to create what he defines as “democratic road to socialism” (1978), which involves “entering state institutions (parliament, economic and social councils, ‘planning’ bodies, etc.) in order to use their characteristic levers for a good purpose”, in combination with “the development of popular movements, the mushrooming of democratic organs at the base, and the rise of centres of self-management.” A kind of extended or prolonged “dual power” that is, of two powers (the government at the top and the popular organs at the base) that are not in antagonism, but rather in cooperation with each other. George Ciccariello-Maher (2013) argues that in modern-day (as of 2013) Venezuela we experienced a different kind of dual power condition in which the state is actively and “from above” promoting the creation of grassroots structures, with the intention of gradually dissolving itself until it becomes a “non state.” Venezuelan activist and former Vice Minister of Planning Roland Denis (2014, n.p.) ,however, claims that quite the contrary is happening in his country: the Bolivarian Revolution has created its own “petite-bourgeoisie”, and it has not favoured any idea of power de-concentration, transparency, or people’s direct participation in

public power. Bolivian Vice-President (and the regime's main ideologue) Álvaro García Linera, on the other hand, argues for a dual power condition in which the state and the government is subordinated to the movements that brought it to state power for a long period of time, during which the "dual power condition" is sooner or later expected to arrive to its "bifurcation point that consolidates a new political system or re-establishes the old one (a combination of parliamentary forces, alliances, and changing government procedures) and reconstitutes the symbolic order of state power (the ideas that guide social life)" (García Linera 2010, 36). In addition, according to García Linera, it is expected that after almost a century of Andean-Amazonian capitalism, the Bolivians are expected to make their gradual transition to socialism.

Therefore, dual power is a condition that involves aspects of both the state and the non-state power roads, which however is eventually resolved (at least in theory) towards one or the other direction. To sum up, no matter how the "dual power" condition is resolved, revolutionary movements have two options in their *journey* towards social change, each with each own benefits and pitfalls:

A) the conquest of state-power (the state power road) which can be achieved through:

A1- the participation in electoral politics (the *parliamentary route* of Petras and Veltmeyer, (2009:100) or the "democratic road to socialism" of Poulantzas (1978), and the *electoral route* in my typology,

A2- the seizure of state power through irregular, extra-constitutional, and/or violent means (*la via armada* or *la guerilla* as it is known in Latin America or the *insurgent route* in my typology), or some kind of combination of the two; and

B) the autonomous self-governance of their territory, resources, and activities (the "*non-state power road*").

Theoretical Approach

My research will draw on insights borrowed from social movement organizations and strategic interaction theories and will attempt to locate and explain the mechanisms behind actors' choices. It will evolve around the Historical Institutionalist idea that institutions (such as the state) do matter for actors' political strategies because they set the "field" on which political battles are fought, with the prize being either the control of already existing institutions or the shaping of future ones (Steinmo, 2001; in Clark and Foweraker, 2001). Theda Skocpol (1994), who has studied social revolutions thoroughly, also agrees with this, arguing that the structure of state institutions has severe effects on the outcomes of the revolutions. But before moving on to the analysis of my theoretical approach, it would be useful to define how "power", "state power", and "political power" will be used in this research.

Conceptualization of Power

While the concept of "power" plays a crucial role in Petras and Veltmeyer's three roads to social change, as well as in Holloway's *No-Power road*, they all thoroughly avoid defining what power means for them, leaving it to our intuitive understanding. And this is the case in general in social sciences, as Jasper (2005) argues, where power is usually defined as "possession of superior physical resources" enough to force others to act against their will or their interests. And as Saul Alisnky reminds us (1971,1989) "power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have." What this research project will evolve around, however, is not only the concept of "state power" but also that of "political power".

State power, is related to the control of the state apparatus: "the set of organizations involved in making and implementing binding collective decisions, if necessary by force" (Ruschemeyer et al., 1992:6). Political power on the other hand, is mostly related to control over public resources (including wealth and labour), yet not necessarily through the official apparatus of the state.

However, as historical institutionalist theorists would argue, the state does matter since it is not just the prize over which political struggles are fought, but also a set of institutions that structure the character of that struggle, and which has in its own turn been a product of previous historical struggles for power and resources.

Historical Neo-Institutionalism

Institutionalists believe that institutions "structure" and "define" politics because they define the participants in political arenas, shape their political strategies and influence their desirable/possible preferences (Steinmo, 2001). They are the *chess-board* where the *chess-game* between the incumbents and the challengers is played, and they are a *chess-board* that is a product of previous *chess-games*. Institutions are usually defined as broadly as "written and unwritten rules", or as narrowly as "the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy" (Hall and Taylor, 1996:938).

Yet, while for Rational Choice Institutionalists individuals behave strategically within a context shaped by a given institution in order to maximize their benefit over their competitors, for Historical Institutionalists individual choices depend on the interpretation of situations based on historical or cultural patterns, rather than on mathematical calculations of maximum gain. For them, culture, ideas, and -more importantly- history do matter; because political events take place within a specific historical and cultural context that influences them, as well as the fact that actors learn from past experiences (Steinmo, 2008). While Rational Choice Institutionalists look for laws of political behaviour and action and are rather deductive and theoretical in their approach, Historical Institutionalists are mostly interested in obtaining a deep understanding of specific political processes and are rather empirical and inductive. They try to understand why certain political choices were made at certain historical "junctures", as well as why certain political outcomes occurred, and they do so through process tracing and path analysis.

For them, history is not a chain of un-related events, quite the contrary: choices made at a specific point in time, can have irreversible events in the future. As Jasper (2005:19) puts it: “At fateful moments, the individual must launch out into something new, knowing that a decision made, or a specific course of action followed, has an irreversible quality, or at least that it will be difficult thereafter to revert to the old paths.” Manali Desai (2003; in Goldstone, 2003) also argues that certain political choices can have a “lag effect”, conditioning the future of the organization that made them for decades to come, while for Davis et al. (2005:58) path dependence is a process in which “apparently small or insignificant events or decisions result in an organizational or institutional change that persists over long periods of time and that limits the range of options available to actors in the future.” Or as Kathleen Blee (2012) argues, activist groups’ action over time takes place in path trajectories with turning points, while even small events can have massive effects on the development of a movement –especially if they happen early. After all, as Koopmans notes: “movement actors do not make their collective action decisions in isolation, but draw on the experiences of other collective actors, in the same movement, and in other movements” (2005:20).

Selbin (2009) talks of a kind of conscious identification with and emulation of other people’s experience in the sense that people –and therefore movements- “draw their sense of possibility from other people, cultures, and times, usually indicated by stories from elsewhere which people connect to their particular time and place and the notion that ‘if they can do it there, we can do it here.’” Knight (2001:150 n1, cited in Selbin 2009) talks of the “demonstration effect”: this involves the inspiration that people who consider themselves “oppressed” in place X receive from people whom they consider in a similar condition in place Y that nonetheless reacted against their condition and gained something through their reaction. Such actions can have incredible resonance both in time and space, indifferently of whether they take place nearby or far away, today or a hundred years ago. Wickham-Crowley makes the same argument when referring to the influence the Cuban revolution had on Latin American guerrillas, as it came to re-shape the people’s perception of the possible, “whether accurately or not,” as he notes:

“The thought processes of future guerrillas were probably remarkably neat: if Cuba can carry out a socialist revolution under the very nose, and against the resistance, of yanqui imperialism then why not here as well?” (Wickham-Crowley 1993, 32)

As for the strategic choices actors make, they are not just products of calculations over profit maximization, but they are filtered through culture, history, and ideology.

Strategic Interactions and Political Opportunity Structures

This research project will focus on the mechanisms, the *how’s* and *why’s*, of movements’ strategic choices. More specifically, it will attempt to find out how and through which mechanisms revolutionary movements decide what *road* and what *route* to social change to follow. In addition, it will attempt to explore why and how revolutionary movements decide to make strategic shifts, when they do so, at the “fateful moments” (Giddens, as cited in Jasper, 2005), “critical junctures” (Hall and Taylor, 1996), “turning points” (Abbot 1997, as cited in Blee, 2012), or “transformative events” (Della Porta, 2008) of their history.

As James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer summarize (2011) social change can be analyzed in terms of three factors, which they describe as dynamic: *structure*, *agency*, and *context*. Structure is related to the institutional practices that define political action: the “rules of the game”. Agency on the other hand, has to do with the strategic actions adopted by organizations and individuals, either within those “rules” or outside of them. And context is about the subjective “filtering” through ideas, culture and past experience, of certain historical moments when important strategic decisions are made.

When it comes to strategic choices of social –including revolutionary- movements, in the mainstream academic thinking and analysis of issues of collective action, one of the most, if not the most dominant approach of understanding it is that of Political Process

Framework and Political Opportunity Structures (POS)[11]. According to this, the mobilisation and tactics of social movements are deeply interrelated to the political environment within which they operate. When that political environment "*expands*" or "*opens up*", or when the movements start acquiring allies within the political system, the theory considers it more probable for the movements to mobilise (della Porta and Diani, 1999:9; Van Dyke, in Goldstone 2003: 226; McAdam et al, 2001: 14-15; Kriesi, 2004; in Snow and Soule, 2004). Political Opportunities, however, are mostly focused on *structure*, and have more to do with the state; which is viewed as the "mastermind" behind the expansion or limitation of political opportunities that the movements respond to, since the state sets the "rules of the game". In other cases, when movements decide not to play by the rules ("sometimes breaking the rules is the only way to get anything", argue Piven and Cloward (Jasper, 2004:9) since the rules are specially designed to keep oppressed groups down) and "create" their own political opportunities, the state once again plays the role of the protagonist, with its reaction to the "challenge", which is what the theorists in the field usually focus on (Kriesi, 2004; Goldstone 2003).

In his excellent work on Latin American guerrillas from 1956 to 1990, Wickham-Crowley (Wickham-Crowley 1993) is studying why some guerrillas of the first and second wave were successful in conquesting state power while others were not, and analyzes under what circumstances revolutionaries managed to come to power. Even in this excellent work though, the author starts his analysis from the moment that the movements had already decided what road to social change to follow, and he does not focus on how that decision was taken.

Trying to explain the emergence of social movement mobilisation in Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, and Venezuela and not in other Latin American countries, Deborah Yashar (2005) and Eduardo Silva (2009) come to the conclusion that three factors account for this development: a) the introduction of neoliberal policies that disrupted pre-established local autonomies, b) the presence of political associational space, c) and the

[11] For a detailed and thorough discussion of the POS see Goodwin and Jasper (2004) and (Kriesi 2004)

presence of trans-community networks. They also note that in all the aforementioned cases the movements took a rather reformist stance towards the state focusing on electoral processes. However, while they do explain the *timing* and the *form* in which mobilization appeared, they do not explain the *mechanism* through which the movements' political strategy was decided upon.

Furthermore, as Goodwin and Jasper (1999) notice, not all movements target the state as their main "opponent", therefore not all movements can be equally served by political process models since there are movements that target cultural or other non-material goals (many of the "new social movements"), which are not related to the expansion (or limitation) of political opportunities. Indeed, at the end of the day, political process models can explain the "when's" of social movement mobilisation, but not so much the "why's" and the "how's" (ibid).

In this research project, I will also try to understand *why* and *through what mechanisms* revolutionary movements decide to (or not to) make strategy shifts, to change (or not to change) their strategies. According to the relevant literature, there are two reasons why a social movement may make a strategy change:

a) Certain goals may be blocked in the process of the interaction between the movement and its "opponent". That can happen either because of changing conditions/political opportunities or because of weakening of the means available to the movement, and equal adjustment of the ends. On the other hand, new goals may appear on the horizon, goals that seemed too distant at earlier phases of the movement. In the latter case though, social movements that decide to make a "scale-shift" through diffusion and brokerage (Tarrow and McAdam, 2003) or to "switch arenas" (J. M. Jasper 2006, 154) will eventually extend themselves far from their initial origins, but at the same time will introduce new tensions, frames, actors, and contradictions to the movements themselves. Several of these possible dilemmas and changing conditions are analysed in James Jaspers relevant work (J. M. Jasper 2006).

b) Social Movements themselves, constitute “arenas” where different groups with sometimes differing ideas compete with each other over the control of the movement organization. Sometimes it so happens that a new generation takes over or a certain group within the movement becomes more powerful, in both cases putting their stamp on the movement itself (Jasper, 1997, 2006).

Therefore, even when it comes to the strategic choices of movements, the explanations that have been offered by the academia are either focused on the environment external to the movement (state, international context) or to processes that take place inside the movement itself (loss or acquisition of resources, or changes in the movement’s internal structure). For the cases in which social movements decide to stick to their initial strategies, the theory offers three explanations:

a) Either the strategy is successful, therefore “winning teams do not change”, or
b) The movements do not have enough resources to make the necessary “scale shifts”, therefore they again adjust their ends to their means, or
c) Due to path dependence reasons, the movements are “locked in” a particular strategic path of which they are very difficult to get out.

Summarizing how social movements make strategic choices, James Jasper wrote back in 2005 that social movement scholars are used to having a very structural way of looking at strategy, focusing more on the state’s reaction, but “…we knew almost nothing, I discovered, about how activists (and others) make strategic decisions…”. This is the gap that I intend to fill with my research.

Opening up the black box: My argument.

Social movements’ theory has been surprisingly silent regarding the mechanisms through which social –and revolutionary- movements form their political strategies. The dominant theories in the field are either state- or resource-centred. Again, with the notable exception of James Jasper who focuses though on the strategic interactions that occur between the movements and the state, and not on mechanisms through which their political strategies are formed (J. M. Jasper 2006). According to them, movements mainly respond to the opening up –or closure- of political opportunities on behalf of the state, or to the abundance or lack of resources that would allow them make the necessary scale-

shift from the local to the national level. It is argued therefore that under repressive regimes it is more probable that revolutionary movements will respond with violent means, while under more democratic ones a reformist, systemic, response is more likely to be expected.

At the same time, when movements lack the necessary resources it is more likely that they adapt their strategies to the resources they have available to them and widen or shorten their outreach and their ambitions and targets accordingly. All the above is in some cases valid. However, the above theories place a disproportionate emphasis on the environment external to the movements, viewing the movements themselves as passive recipients of the external stimuli, each time trying to respond to them in a defensive, reactive, almost instinctive, manner. In addition, the above theories are valid in that the external environment may make some options more desirable/realistic and some others less so, however, it is the movements that take the decision of what strategy to adopt, not their environment. But how do they take that decision? Are they simply reacting to external stimuli? In the relevant theory, there is a void between the movements themselves and the decision taken in the end. What happens in that void? In that black box? What mechanisms are set in motion? Therefore, while remaining relevant, this thesis will not focus on when it is more probable for revolutionary movements to mobilize and what repertoires of contention they select when they do so. It will rather focus on the mechanisms through which their political strategy is selected.

In the cases I am examining, the movements' strategic choices were not at all simply reactive to the changing external circumstances. Of course the political opportunities available (or unavailable) played the role of the "additional argument" to strengthen or challenge the movements' choices, and they sometimes explain the timing in which a certain strategy is put in action. However they did not determine them. In Chiapas, the FLN/EZLN believed they would themselves create the conditions for the revolutionary strategy they had selected to advance. At first, especially in the late 1960s, they perceived that political opportunities were closed in any case and there was no other option available. But even after the amnesty and the new electoral law of 1978, when all other Mexican *guerrillas* had given up the armed struggle, and when –theoretically- there were other options on the table, they firmly maintained their belief in the armed struggle. In addition, even in 1969 when they first made the choice of the armed struggle, it was not a product of a simple reaction to the political opportunities (un)available. It was rather a product of a) long research ("scientific study" according to the FLN) on revolutionary change experiences elsewhere in order to select the most appropriate strategy, and b) a long preparation of the movements' support base to ensure the ideological hegemony of the decision taken as well the discipline of the grassroots. The research involved historical

examples at home or abroad, current or past, that were thoroughly explored and were constantly compared to counter-examples in order to ensure their superiority and hegemony over counterproposals. The preparation of the grassroots and the hegemony of the selected strategy were ensured through numerous workshops, and clandestine and more open publications that were offered to the support bases.

The same is the case for the Six Federations of Coca Producers of the Tropics of the Chapare. Their first strategy was that of relevant autonomy based on the organizational model of the *sindicato*, which was the hegemonic organizational structure in Bolivia after the Revolution of 1952. When their autonomy was violated by Law 1008, they responded selecting the electoral route over the *via armada*, influenced by the Thesis of Pulacayo and the experience of the *Bloque Parlamentario Minero*, over failed revolutionary endeavours like that of *Che* for example.

Political opportunities, like the Amnesty of 1978 and the new electoral law in Mexico, or the Popular Participation Law of 1994 in Bolivia, were additional incentives in the movements' argumentation which were not always taken advantage of, neither were they the determining factor behind the strategy eventually selected by the movements. That was rather the perceived viability of the selected strategy, based on the study of past or current experience of local or international movements. When it comes to the mechanisms through which revolutionary movements form their political strategies now, I have identified the following: cultural resonance, learning, propaganda and training, internal competition, cross-fertilization, experimentation, and ideology. They are further analysed in the pages that follow.

Summing up, I argue that at least in the cases that I am examining we can identify three phases that marked the formation of the movements' political strategies: the phase of selecting the most relevant strategy from the resonating cases, the phase of winning the ideological hegemony within the movement itself, and the phase of securing the discipline of the grassroots. Overall, the strategic choice of the movements was made through a combination of a) across time and space resonance of own-or-other experiences at home or abroad, b) in-depth study and –sometimes- active research of the resonating cases, and c) active training of the movements' constituencies to secure the ideological hegemony of the choice made and the discipline of the militants to the selected strategy.

That is my contribution to the relevant theory and case studies. I do not necessarily claim that my argument is valid in all cases of revolutionary movements, that it is generalizable, or anything of the sort. However, I do claim that I have identified the most likely explanation for the cases I am studying, an explanation that *may* be valid for similar experiences of other movements that have faced similar circumstances in the same or other part of the world and historical periods.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

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METHODOLOGY

Case Selection

My research evolves around the field of interpretive comparative politics (Bayard de Volo 2015), trying to identify the meanings that actors attach to their actions and choices. I have chosen two cases that from my point of view are representative of the phenomenon I intend to study; more specifically how and through what mechanisms political strategies are chosen by revolutionary movements. I follow a case-oriented comparative method that belongs to the most similar system design (Della Porta, 2008:214), selecting for case studies two paradigmatic indigenous peoples' movements that faced similar political conditions in similar environments, however, adopted different political strategies in their trajectories towards social change. More specifically, both movements are largely indigenous, in two Latin American countries where the ideology of *mestizaje/cholaje* was socially dominant; they developed in two rather isolated regions where the state was nearly absent; they both faced repression when they tried to promote their demands through the traditional movement repertoires (protests, marches, etc); however, when they had two decide between the *via armada*, the *via electoral*, or autonomy, they took completely different decisions. The Zapatistas opted for the Insurgent route, while the *Seis Federaciones* for (relative) autonomy instead. And when they had to make a strategic shift, the Zapatistas adopted autonomy, while the *Seis Federaciones* opted for electoral politics instead. What accounts for these different strategic decisions? And through what mechanisms were they made? This is the main puzzle behind this research project, and I attempt to solve it by interpreting the actors' choices in certain periods of time and under certain circumstances, offering - I hope- a deep and detailed description of the historical and political conditions, the localities, and the options available to the protagonists of the "drama". I adopt a process tracing

approach through which I try to identify how and through what kind of processes certain outcomes were reached.

The Cocaleros

The Bolivian *cocaleros*, and their political tool the MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo), emerged in the coca-growing Chapare region in the '60s and managed to elect the first indigenous President in Latin America in the last 500 hundred years (Evo Morales), in 2005. During the time of the emergence of the *cocaleros*, Bolivia was (and still is) one of the poorest countries in Latin America, with a population of around 10 million people, most of which (62% according to Albro, 2005:434; between 39%-60% according to Petras and Veltmeyer, 2009:115) define themselves as "indigenous"[12]. It should also be noted that Bolivia's indigenous population happens to overlap with the 2/3 of the Bolivian citizenry who live in poverty (Albro, 2005). In addition, due to the dominant *mestizo*[13] ideology, the indigenous peoples of Bolivia were regarded to be backward and uncivilised, were largely excluded from the country's political and social life and were generally marginalised (Webber 2005; Albro 2005). It is that indigenous population that the *cocaleros* came to represent demanding inclusion to the political, social, and economic life of the country, recognition of cultural distinctiveness (including that of coca cultivation), as well as access to the country's natural resources and greater control over their own local development.

[12] On an interesting note, according to the census 2012 conducted by INE (INE 2012) the percentage of Bolivians identifying themselves as "indigenous" has dropped by almost 20%. One of the explanations offered has to do with the different framing of the relevant question in the 2012 census compared to the 2001 one. According to Stefanoni (2013), one of the explanatory reasons for tis statistical disappearance of 20% of Bolivia's indigenous is that while the 2001 census was asking whether one belonged to a "*indigena originario*" nation, in 2012 the framing was "*indigena originario camesino.* " The word "campesino" (peasant) may have been the reason behind the big statistical difference noted. Therefore, the two consensuses are not really comparable, yet they are the only official data available.

[13] Mestizaje: racial mixing between Indigenous Mexicans and Mexicans of Spanish origin.

Due to the fact that the government was largely absent from the Cocaleros' stronghold, Chapare, the movement had to fill that void by self-organising, self-distributing land, mediating disputes, building schools, roads, and health clinics through communal work. As Ben Dangl notes (2007), "this organizational structure grew into the Six Federations which is now an umbrella union that includes around 4000 coca farmers in Chapare". When their relative autonomy was violated by the State, even before the introduction of the 1994 Popular Participation Law (Kohl, 2003), in 1995 they decided to form a political instrument, what eventually became the MAS, which represented the Bolivian leftist and indigenous politics in national elections and gradually came to elect the first indigenous President in the history of the country ten years later. Ever since, they have been trying to bring about social change in Bolivia, through the *electoral route*, of the *state power road*.

The Zapatistas

The Zapatistas on the other hand, are a movement which has been characterized as "*the first postmodern revolution*"[14] (Nash 2005; Harvey 2005; Collier and Collier 2005), a movement of "*both theorists and rebels*" (Klein 2001, cited in *Ya Basta* 2004), and a military movement which has been using its word more than its weapons. And of course, they have been stamped by the context within and against which they emerged: the region of Chiapas, and the state of México. México by the time of the Zapatista uprising was one of the biggest countries of Latin America in terms of population and also one of the poorest. It also had one of the largest indigenous populations in the Americas, although that fact was undermined by a national ideology of *mestizaje* which had long held that Indians were part of Mexico's past and, as such, were politically excluded and economically exploited (Speed and Collier 2000: 883). In addition, at the time of the Zapatista uprising Mexico had been governed for over 70 years by a system of one party hegemony, that of

[14] Postmodern, due to the fact that they are not targeting political power; instead the Zapatistas are mostly concerned about the recognition of indigenous people's rights. In addition, several theorists use the term "postmodern" to refer to the extensive use of the internet and the media by the movement.

the party which emerged after the end of the Mexican Revolution in 1920: the PRI - Partido Revolucionario Institutional[15]. The PRI, through a strategy of clientelism and repression, had managed to renew its power every six years by continuously adapting to new circumstances. The conservatism and indifference of the Mexican population towards politics also played a role in that circumstance and contributed to the reproduction of authoritarian practices by the PRI (De Leon 2005: 510).

Today, more than 20 years after the uprising, Chiapas – or, to be more specific, the Zapatista communities in Chiapas- is a very different place, and this is so largely because of the transformations the Zapatista movement has brought about in the socio-political dynamics of the region, and the country as a whole. First of all, they have played an undoubtedly important role in the democratisation of the Mexican society. They have opened up new political spaces and they have also contributed to the overthrowing of the dominant political party of Mexico for the last 70 years, the PRI. Moreover, they have managed to bring the indigenous people to the frontline of Mexican political life, and they have also established a *de facto* autonomous area within Mexico, under their control. In that "*safe territory*" (Bosi 2013) they practise their idea of self-governance and decision-making, they plan and implement their own developmental projects, and they even provide public services such as health and education, in the way they have imagined them. These developments are not minor, and they have been achieved without the seizure of state power. On the other hand, the non-electoral strategy of the movement has, according to some analysts, severely constrained the Zapatistas. By choosing not to convert themselves into a formal political party, the Zapatistas have not been able "*to turn to their own advantage the transformations they themselves helped to create*", argues De Leon (2005:521) for example.

[15] PRI: successor of Partido Revolucionario Mexicano (Mexican Revolutionary Party), which emerged after the end of the Mexican Revolution (1920) and had been governing the country since then, up until 2000.

This research project intends to examine how the socio-historical conditions that led to the emergence of each social movement have influenced the selection of the political strategy it decided to follow, to understand why and how movements shift from one political strategy to another (when they do so), as well as to explain through what mechanisms this happens.

METHODS OF DATA GATHERING

It so very often happens that when a researcher sets off on his/her fieldwork they have a methodological approach in mind that would be fit in "ideal conditions." However, it is highly probable that once one is actually in the field, the conditions he/she encounters are not by any means "ideal", and he/she has little or absolutely no control over the actual conditions he/she is actually faced with; therefore his/her methodological approach has to be adjusted accordingly. For those of us who conduct interpretive political ethnographic research, there are cases in which the research cannot be pre-designed, or even if it is, it does not flow as it was designed to do. By its very nature, interpretive political ethnography in the subject's own environment needs to be open to surprises in the field, as well as to be flexible and readily adaptive in its methods. As Malthaner summarises "When confronted with unforeseen difficulties or sudden changes in their environment, researchers may be forced to change and revise their research strategies to cope with emerging problems and take advantage of opportunities, even if this means deviating from research designs and partly abandoning work plans" (Malthaner 2014). That is the case of my experience with the EZLN and the ex-FLN in Mexico.

The EZLN is probably one of the most well-researched revolutionary movements in history. For a large part of the '90s and the '00s a huge number of publications about the EZLN filled the shelves of bookstores and University libraries all over the globe. Translated from languages ranging from Greek to English or Turkish, numerous publications, both academic and non academic, claimed to explain –or at least explore- this mysterious

"otherly" movement that came out of the Chiapan mist on January 1, 1994. What is surprising however is that a considerable number of these publications have been based on secondary data and their authors have not actually directly conducted research in Chiapas- with a few notable exceptions of course (Stahler-Sholk, Baronnet, and Mora Bayo 2011; Andrés Aubry 2003; Muñoz Ramírez 2008; Vergara-Camus 2014 and a few others). At best, they were based on *comunicados* published by the EZLN itself, or on information most probably leaked by the Mexican secret agencies (see Tello Díaz 1995 for example[16]). This is so because for many years now the movement has been "closed" to researchers and journalists; this means that in order for somebody to conduct interviews with the Zapatistas he/she would have to obtain permission from the *Comandancia* of the EZLN or from the *relevant Junta de Buen Gobierno*. It is also surprising that despite the vast bibliography on the EZLN there has been very little focus in the relevant research on its mother-organization: the *Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional* (*FLN*). Due to these limitations, in my fieldwork I relied on political ethnography methods (participant observation, informal chats), as well as on archival research of internal documents (*comunicados*, internal magazines, public magazines) of the *FLN,* and of previously classified secret intelligence files about the FLN that I managed to obtain access to. In my analysis I also draw on several previously unpublished books and theses that focus on exactly that: the history of the *Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional*.

Political ethnography

Javier Auyero has noted that however surprising it may seem, politics, political processes and their main protagonists (parties, social movements) have remained rather understudied by ethnography's mainstream, and vice versa (Auyero 2006). Joseph et al. (2007, 2) characterize this phenomenon as a "double absence": of politics in ethnographic studies, as well as of ethnographic methods in political research. George Marcus affirms

[16] See Harvey (2005:9) for more information on that.

that “the interest in all of those things that would be classed under 'the social' -social relations, processes, structures, systems, matters of political economy- have been relatively neglected [by anthropology]in favour of attention to, for example, subject positions, identity construction, dialogic exchange, and micro-examinations of embedded practices, restricted to the intimate traditional scene of fieldwork” (Marcus 2006). The use of ethnographic methods to study political processes is called political ethnography. Or, as Baiocchi and Connor (2008:139) have defined it, political ethnography is “a research method that is based on close-up and real-time observation of actors involved in political processes, at times even extending the definition of these processes to move beyond categories of state, civil society, and social movements”. According to Charles Tilly (Tilly 2006), some of the methodological tools included in political ethnography are as follows:

a) In-depth interviews
b) Conversations
c) Participant observation
d) Passive observation of interaction
e) Covert observation of interaction
f) Intrusive observation concerning residues and consequences of interaction

As Rhodes notes (2015, 181), political ethnography does not necessarily involve long and day-to-day interaction with the subjects under observation. Especially in the cases of elites, who very often refuse to be observed, intensive, shorter-term ethnography may be preferred as the method of last resort, what Rhodes calls “hit-an-run” ethnography. Malthaner writes that in contrast to traditional anthropological ethnography in which the researchers spend long time periods –even years- in one environment, comparative political scientists often spend less time but visit a bigger number of field sites, and combine participant observation with more formal methods. However, what these two approaches have in common is a) that they both involve research in the “subject’s” environment that the researcher often does not control, and b) that they involve personal

relations that go beyond small and encounters for exchange of information (Malthaner 2014). My research involves multi-sited (Marcus 1995) political ethnography, in which I follow a phenomenon in different field-sites, a phenomenon that under similar conditions takes different forms. My fieldwork sites were multiple, both country-wise (Mexico-Bolivia), and community-wise (I visited different communities/regions within each country), and the time I spent on each of my case-studies varied according to the field conditions encountered. In short, in my research I opted for "the art of the possible" (Hannerz 2003) trying to balance lack of extensive participant observation with formal interviews and vice-versa, depending on the case.

In my research in Chiapas I relied greatly on political ethnography in order to gain privileged access to specific data. As *Andrés Aubry* wrote years ago, "a researcher doing fieldwork in Chiapas had better not reveal his/her anthropological identity: it is the worst presentation card for the indigenous people. They define him/her as somebody who passes by the communities for a while and within a year leaves in order to write a book without ever coming back." That book, which extracts information like raw material from a mine, is according to Aubry considered of very little use for the indigenous people who –in addition- "are illiterate since the Conquest"(Andrés Aubry 2011, 59-author's translation from Spanish). It is a common practice, especially in over-researched environments, for movement activists not to trust researchers who are seen as interested in advancing their own careers without any benefit for the movements themselves (Milan 2014). My own experience in Chiapas confirms Aubry's and Milan's observations.

I did not conduct any formal interviews (except for one, with one of the founding members of the FLN) since that was the agreement I had with the movement from the beginning. However, I did get involved in numerous informal conversations and I had the opportunity to participate in the day-to-day life activities in several Zapatista communities and *caracoles* over the course of 5 years, experiences that filled numerous pages in my fieldwork notebooks. I have stayed in four out of the 5 *caracoles* (Oventik, La Realidad,

Morelia, Roberto Barios- I have not been to La Garrucha) from a period that ranges between two days and two months, depending on the *caracol*; I have lived in three Zapatista communities as a human rights observer for a period that ranges from one to two weeks depending on the community, and I have also participated in the first and the second *Escuelita Zapatista* in 2013 and 2015. Through this participation, I did gain access to information that is related to the movement's past as well as to confidential information that is related both to the movement's past and to its present. The confidential information I was exposed to is not included in this thesis. At the same time, names and other details of my interviewees have been changed, if they appear at all.

Archival Research

I have also been lucky enough to obtain access to important archival material related to the FLN/EZLN. This material consists of:

-28 internal *comunicados* of the FLN, dating from 1969 to 1980.

- 5 issues of the internal magazine *Nepantla* of the FLN, dating from January 1979 to June 1980, with an average of 50-60 pages each.

-3 issues of the *Conciencia Proletaria*, which was a more externally oriented publication of the FLN, dating from September 1979 to April 1980, with on average 100 pages each.

-The campaign diary of the day of the establishment of the EZLN, photocopied as it was handwritten on 17 November 1983 in the mountains of Chiapas

- The Statutes of the FLN that were agreed upon in 1980

-Several –until recently classified- official reports that the Mexican police and army had compiled on the FLN.

I have to say here that I have been particularly cautious with the files that have been compiled by the Mexican security services (police, army) and are now found in the *Archivo General de la Nación*[17]. I do not treat them by any means as representative of the historical truth around the action of the FLN. At the end of the day, as Bosi and Reiter note regarding state archives, these files are generated by the state and there's always a risk of favouring a state-centred analysis of historical problems (Bosi and Reiter 2014). However, even though I do not necessarily treat those archives as objective or historically accurate, I believe that they do provide valuable information on what the Mexican security services believed about the FLN, on how they actually viewed and treated the movement, and such information should not be ignored. Of course, in my work I am not claiming historical credits, neither do I claim to reconstruct the history of the *Fuerzas*. That is for historians and the movement itself to do. However, I do present a version of the movement's evolution that I managed to reconstruct during my fieldwork, using the sources that are available to historians and political scientists up to date. And, in studying the internal documents of the movement I am trying to identify why and through what processes several strategic decisions were made during that specific historical time and within that specific historical context.

When it comes to my other case-study, the Six Federations of Coca Producers of the Chapare, *las Seis Federaciones*, the research conditions were very different. The movement, which is basically the government, is much more open to researchers and journalists. It is not clandestine –like the EZLN- it has much less to fear, while it also cares greatly about its public image. However, what I realized is that despite the increased interest in Bolivian politics and the MAS, especially after Evo Morales' electoral triumph, not much of this research has focused on the region and the movement that gave birth to the MAS: the Chapare, and its Six Federations of Coca Producers.

[17] They were *declassified* for some time and researchers could have access to them, however from 2014 onwards they are now again considered *classified*.

Interviews

During my research in the Chapare, apart from the relevant and necessary bibliographical review, I relied on theory-driven participant observation, and semi-structured interviews of different types including oral-histories, as well as key-informant interviewing. I conducted my fieldwork in the Chapare between September and December 2013, and I had the opportunity to interview and interact with several leaders and members of the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba. My fieldwork in the Chapare, in contrast to my fieldwork in Chiapas, did not involve long periods of observation and deep involvement with the movement; it was much shorter, yet very intensive. It was rather closer to what Rhodes (2015:181) calls "hit-and-run" ethnography. More specifically, I conducted 25 interviews with cocalero leaders, MAS deputies, MAS Mayors and Governors, journalists on the MAS payroll, Bolivian activists, academics that have worked on the topic, and one focus group with 5 non-MAS *Chapareño* cocalero leaders. I also had the opportunity to be present at meetings of Evo Morales himself with the cocalero leaders of the *Seis Federaciones* in the Chapare, and to visit community radios, the new TV/Radio station Kawsachun Coca, most of the towns and villages in which the movement was born and developed, as well as …the military camp of the infamous *leopardos* in *Chimoré*. I also had numerous informal interactions with non-elite cocaleros that are impossible to recount and measure, as well as dozens of pages on my fieldwork notes.

Most of my interviews were conducted by myself alone, while a number of them were conducted by myself and Argentinean journalist Tomás Astelarra, who was also working on more or less the same topic and our fieldwork (and interview appointments) coincided several times. In some of the interviews the main interviewer is me, in some others Tomas Astelarra, while there are interviews in which we both lead the discussion. 18 of the interviews were recorded on my voice recorder, on 5 I was keeping notes on my fieldwork notebook(s), and one was interrupted …by the police. I reached most of my interviewees through the snowball method, while several of them acted as *gatekeepers* in

order for me to gain access to others. The interviews lasted between half an hour and three hours depending on the interviewee, and I almost never had absolute control over the conditions under which they were conducted. Most of the time the interviews took place in the interviewees' immediate environment, in nearby cafes, in their houses, in their offices, or in the cocalero offices and headquarters of the region we were in. For my Bolivian case, I conducted interviews in two countries (Mexico, Bolivia), and ten different cities, towns, and villages; namely: San Cristobal de las Casas (Mexico), La Paz (Bolivia), Cochabamba (Bolivia), Entre Rios (Chapare, Bolivia), Chipiriri (Chapare, Bolivia), Lauca *Ñ (Chapare, Bolivia), Shinahota (Chapare, Bolivia), Eterazama (Chapare, Bolivia), Quatro Esquinas (Chapare, Bolivia), and Villa Tunari (Chapare, Bolivia).*

To answer my first research question, I relied on oral and life histories and key-informant interviews as the most relevant methods in an effort to understand why and how the *cocaleros* of the Chapare decided to follow the *state power road* to social change. Oral history interviewing is often used in order to understand past periods of current social movements (Rupp and Taylor, 1987; Staggenborg, 1991; cited in Klandermas and Staggerborg, 2002:102) and they are very rich for more in-depth explanatory accounts (della Porta 2014), while key-informants are crucial in order to gain an insider's view to the understanding of a social movement, especially when the research question –as in this case- pertains to organizational considerations such as structure, strategies and culture (Rupp and Taylor, 1987; Staggenborg, 1991; cited in Klandermas and Staggerborg, 2002:102) . Key informants in my case were selected on the basis of their role in the social movements under study. I did however not try to speak only to leaders, but also to the rank-and-file members of the movement since, as della Porta emphasizes they are a) more in numerical terms and b) they tend to provide more honest accounts both off their own lives and of the functioning of the structure of the movement(della Porta 2014).

Oral history and key informant interviews are also be particularly useful in answering my second research question: when social movements decide to make a

strategy shift, why they do so and through what mechanism does that happen. Since both of the case studies I am examining have at some point changed their political strategies (the Zapatistas from *the insurgent route* of the state *power road*, to the *non-state power* one; and the *Cocaleros* from the *non-state power road*, to the *electoral route* of the *state power* one) it was particularly interesting for me to be able to dive into the past periods during which these specific strategic shifts took place, through the narratives of their members and the archival material I could get my hands on.

Of course, my account does not claim to be either perfect or complete, however I do claim to have done the best I could to obtain as much research material as I could get access to, under difficult –most of the times- research conditions and circumstances. In addition, I do not have any ambition to extract general rules that are applicable in all similar cases and all circumstances from my research and my case studies. I don't have a positivist stance towards political and sociological research, neither do I believe in it. However, being rather abductive in my reasoning, I do claim that I have identified the most likely explanation for the specific cases I have been studying, an explanation that could also possibly be valid for similar cases that have faced similar circumstances in the same or other parts of the world and historical periods.

Fieldwork conditions and Research Ethics

In order to be able to conduct my research I did first have to learn the language that is spoken in the countries that my research led me to: Spanish. Of course, in both of my cases most of the movement participants did not have Spanish as their mother tongue, but rather as a second language- just like me. In Chiapas, the people speak several dialects of the Mayan language (Tsotsil, Tseltal, Zoque, Mame, Tojolabal, Chol), but most of the people I interacted with could also speak (to varying extents) Spanish. However, in order to facilitate my research and also in order to gain a perspective of the cosmo-vision that

comes with a language, I did take the effort to learn Tsotsil in the caracol of Oventik, following the suggestion of local *promotores* who also became my *maestros* and whom I am fortunate enough to consider friends. And it was well worth the effort, since in Tsotsil there are a whole variety of notions that do not exist in Spanish (and vice-versa), which have been very influential in the rhetoric of the Zapatista movement. Just to give one example, the verb “to struggle/fight” does not exist in Tsotsil. Instead, the Tsotsiles of *Los Altos* of Chiapas use the verb “to form the word/ crear la palabra”, which may also hint to several strategic actions of the Zapatistas: they are a movement that has “fired” more words than bullets after all, since “their word is their weapon.”

In the Chapare nowadays the spoken language is Spanish, however many of the *Chapareños* do also speak either Quechua or Aymara (and very few Guarani). Due to the “hit-and-run” character of my ethnographic work there, I did not get involved in learning any of the local languages.

The conditions I had to deal with during my fieldwork varied significantly in my two cases. At the time of my research, the two movements found themselves in different structural historical conditions, therefore my research had to adopt accordingly. In Mexico my research was two-fold: on the one hand there is the EZLN, clandestine, in the mountains and jungles of Chiapas, not open at all to journalistic or academic research, with which I had the agreement not to conduct any interviews. However, I was allowed to be a participant observer and I did have the opportunity to get involved in numerous informal conversations with older and younger members of the movement. I mostly conducted my fieldwork in Zapatista communities and *caracoles*, under basic living conditions, which however gave me privileged access to the localities where the movement has developed, and first-hand experience of the difficulties, the environmental and social conditions, as well as the power relations it has had to deal with. That privileged access has given me valuable insights and has helped me reconstruct parts of the movement’s history. Most of the times I went to the communities accompanied, following strict security measures. On

the other hand, the FLN –or at least the FLN members that are still alive- are not very open to sharing their history either. Since some of them have been accused by the Mexican state for participating in the EZLN and the 1994 uprising, and since –as one BAEZLN member explained to me once- there is still an ongoing hide-and-seek game between the EZLN/FLN and the authorities regarding the origins and past and present actions of the movement, they are very cautious in what they share with outsiders.

Sometimes I did get access to "internal," sensitive information, which I do not include in my thesis. Despite the nature of my research, I never faced any trouble with the Mexican security forces.

In Bolivia on the other hand, the movement is now in the heart of the governing party. It is not clandestine, not facing any threats or forms of violence, and it does care a lot about its public image so it is open to journalists and researchers. Sometimes, through the journalists on its payroll it even facilitates that access. Keeping in mind that there may have been an effort to direct me to the more "professional" leaders and members of the *Seis Federaciones*, to those who are the public voices of the movement and are more used to talking to researchers and journalists, I did not follow much the suggestions I was given. At first, new to the region and its realities, I had to, but after a while I could map the relevant actors and the relevant power relations myself and move accordingly. Of course, that fact eventually led to my arrest and interrogation by the UMOPAR, a fact that may have been related to the identity of the cocalero we were interviewing (opposition to the MAS).

In both cases I tried to follow a "do no harm" approach. When and if I had access to sensitive information, I kept it for myself and did not include it either in this thesis or in any of the journal articles and book chapters that came out of this research. I do not reveal

the names of my interviewees or contacts[18] that did not wish me to do so. I always kept my notes in Greek, a language that I thought would be next to impossible to be spoken by the security services in those lands.

In any case, even if they spoke Greek and they had access to my notes, to be honest I doubt that they would ever be able to read my awful –by any objective criteria- handwriting. Sometimes I fail to do so even myself.

[18] I have chosen not to use the word "informant" in this research. The word informant implies a cold, distant relationship between the researcher and the people he learns from and with. In some cases it did exist, in some other not. With some of the people I interacted with I did actually establish friendships that last up to the present date.

CHAPTER IV

The Zapatistas

CHAPTER IV

THE ZAPATISTAS

Introduction

January 1st 1994.

Presidential Palace, Mexico City.

The New Year's Eve party is over and President Carlos Salinas de Gortari has gone to bed happy, knowing that towards the end of his presidency Mexico is now entering "the First World". With the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) entering into effect with the New Year, Mexico, Canada, and the United States of America would now establish a "free trade zone" under which goods and services would now move freely between those three countries. Not people, however, but that is a different story.

Of course that would also mean the full exposure of Mexican small-scale agricultural producers to unfair competition by the North American multinationals that were producing more cheaply and in larger quantities.

However, Carlos Salinas de Gortari was not meant to sleep long that night. At around 3am he would be awaken by the endless, irritating sound of his phone ringing insistently. It was his Secretary of Defence, General Antonio Riviello Bazán (Salinas de Gortari 2014):

- "There's been a rebellion in Chiapas. Masked, armed men have taken seven municipal towns. We don't know how many yet. They call themselves Zapatistas, and their army the EZLN…"

But who were those masked people that — armed, at least in some cases, only with wooden guns — managed to spoil the President's dreams and capture Mexico's and the

world’s attention (and hearts) ever since? Where did they come from? And what did they want?

In the relevant literature, despite its immensity, the narrative of the Zapatista movement and the EZLN normally begins with a story that resembles a fairytale and –with bigger or smaller variations- normally goes as follows:

“On November 17, 1983 six rebels, five men and one woman, three of them mestizos and the remaining three indigenous, arrived in the Lacandona Jungle and formed the EZLN.”

In the best of the scenarios it may also be noted that those six first EZLN rebels were also members of another, even older, revolutionary organization that was called Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional (FLN- Forces of National Liberation). But what was that organization about? When was it formed? What was its purpose? And why did it decide to send its members to the Selva Lacandona to start a revolutionary struggle? What accounts for its mixed membership (mestizos-indigenous)? And what was its relationship with the EZLN? Thanks to the cloud of secrecy that surrounds the history of the EZLN, the shut mouths, and the fascination of activists and scholars with the story that unfolded from the 1st of January 1994 (or, at least from November, 17 1983) onwards, the history of the EZLN before it became the EZLN has –surprisingly enough- remained unknown and rather ignored by the relevant literature.

For my own research however, the history and origins of the FLN is rather crucial, for the following reason: The EZLN’s decision to walk the via armada was certainly not taken in 1983, when those three mestizos and three indigenous people moved to Chiapas to establish the first camp of the EZLN. It was taken much earlier by the EZLN’s mother-organization, the Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional. In order to explore, therefore, under what circumstances and for what reason that political strategy was preferred and not any other, I had to take a deep dive into the FLN’s past. However, the FLN’s past is not an easy

thing to dive into. The limited historical material that has so far come to light on the history of the FLN, can be found in the two unpublished theses and one published book chapter of Mexican historian Adela Cedillo (Cedillo 2008; 2010; 2012), the unpublished thesis of Christopher Gunderson (2013), and a couple of interviews of Subcomandante Marcos and ex-Subcomandante Daniel. Fortunately, thanks to the assistance of members ex-FLN and the guidance of members of the EZLN, the generosity and collaboration of the Casa de Todas y Todos that decided to entrust me with internal organizational documents of the FLN, and declassified19 surveillance material (around 1000 pages) on the organization that I obtained access to20, I have tried to re-construct parts of that history, which is analyzed in this chapter. Of course, my study does not claim any historical credit and is not preoccupied with the herculean task of presenting a concise history of the FLN. What I focused on, was to study the material I had at hand in an effort to identify the mechanisms through which certain decisions were made regarding the movement's political strategies.

Beforemoving on to the historical analysis, however, it would be useful to explore the socio-geographical contextual characteristics of the country and the region where the Zapatista movement was born: Mexico, and its most south-eastern region, Chiapas.

Mexico

The Zapatista movement arose in one of the poorest regions of México, Chiapas,

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[19] These documents that are related to Mexico's *Guerra Sucia* (some eighty million of them) were made available in to the public in 2002, during the presidency of Vicente Fox, and were placed in the National Archive. Historian Jaime Pensado argues that those documents were declassified in an effort to uncover the PRI's authoritarianism in those years (Pensado 2013, 11). His claim may have some substance considering that on the very same documents access-restrictions were later imposed in 2015, under the Presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto, which marked the return of the PRI to power. It is believed that those restrictions were related to the case of the 43 *desaparecidos* of Ayotzinapa rural school.

[20] I would like to thank Mexican investigative journalist Gaspar Morquecho for our exchange of documents, and the conversations we had during my fieldwork.

and it was stamped by the context within and against which it appeared. México by the time of the Zapatista uprising was one of the biggest countries of Latin America in terms of population, that hosted one of the largest indigenous populations in the Americas (see table 1) although that fact was undermined by a national ideology of *mestizaje*[21] which had long held that the indigenous were part of Mexico's past and, as such, were politically excluded and economically exploited (Speed and Collier 2000: 883). In addition to this, during the time of the Zapatista uprising Mexico had been governed for over 60 years by a system of one-party hegemony, that of the party which emerged from the Mexican Revolution in 1920, the PRI - Partido Revolucionario Institutional[22] (Castillo 2006; Zugman 2005; De León 2005).

Table 1: Estimates of Indigenous People in Latin America (1978-1991)

Estimated % of total population	
Populations over 10%	
Bolivia	60-70
Guatemala	45-60
Peru	38-40
Ecuador	30-38
Mexico	12-14
Populations b/w 5-10%	

[21] Mestizaje: racial mixing between Indigenous Mexicans and Mexicans of Spanish origin.

[22] PRI (officially founded in 1929): successor of Partido Revolucionario Mexicano (Mexican Revolutionary Party) , which emerged after the end of the Mexican Revolution (1920) and had been governing the country since then and until 2000.

Belize	9
Panama	4-8
Chile	4-6
Populations under 5%	
Guyana	4
Surinam	3
Honduras	2-3
Paraguay	2
El Salvador	<2
Colombia	<2
Nicaragua	<2
Argentina	<2
Venezuela	<2
French Guyana	<2
Costa Rica	<1
Brazil	<1
Uruguay	0

Source: Mayer and Masferrer, (1979: 220-221); Stefano Varese, (1991); *Statistical Abstract of Latin America* (1993: 30, pt. I: 150); and *Statistical Abstract of Latin America* (2001: 37. Table 532: 104) , as cited in Yashar (2005).

The PRI, through a strategy of clientelism and repression, was managing to renew its power every six years, by continuously adapting to new circumstances (the electoral reforms, the amnesty of 1978 etc.). As Leonardo Avritzer puts it, although the regime was controlling the electoral game through fraud, repression, and uneven access to financing, it has always been preoccupied with giving a democratic "preface" to the process, having no problem with negotiating and re-negotiating the electoral rules with the opposition whenever that was considered necessary:

"A good analogy of the functioning of the Mexican political system would be an uneven soccer game. It was a game in which one of the teams could have more players than the other and had a smaller goal. Yet the greatest worry of the stronger team was a walk-out. To avoid this, the regime was eager to negotiate the rules. The better the other team played, more willing the stronger team was to make concessions on the rules. This is why there have been so many changes in the electoral law since the 1988 elections." (Avritzer 2002, 142)

Guillermo Trejo argues that this is a typical strategy of "managing dissent" in electoral autocratic regimes[23] and he calls it the strategy of "(partial) carrots and (moderate) sticks":

"*They respond to protest by independent movements with partial satisfaction of their material claims (in the hope of co-opting their leaders) and try to keep demands under control via targeted non-lethal repression (in case cooptation fails).*" (Trejo 2012, 46)

[23] Electoral autocracies are societies in which a single-party keeps ruling, even though elections (partly free/fair) may be regularly taking place.

The conservatism and indifference of the Mexican population towards politics played a role in that fact too and "contributed to the reproduction of authoritarian practices" by the PRI (De León 2005: 510).

The only thing that seems to have managed to pull the Mexican population out of its lethargy was the neoliberal reforms that the Mexican governments had been promoting since 1980. These structural adjustment policies have been dictated by the World Bank and the IMF in response to the 1982 debt crisis, and were also part of the negotiations of the Mexican state with the US under the NAFTA agreement (North American Free Trade Association). These reforms were intensified during the Presidency of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), when Mexico went through rapid political, social, and economic change that had a negative effect on its population (the lowest classes of it especially) as many theorists agree (Harvey 2005; De León 2005; Jung 2003). Those changes included the privatization of national property (land, natural resources, national industries), serious cutbacks on social services expenditure, and the liberalization of trade (reduction or elimination of trade barriers such as tariffs, quotas and subsidies, that were protecting national production against foreign competition)[24]. Guillermo Trejo (2012, 7), in contrast to most of the theorists of the literature, maintains that what actually radicalized Mexico's peasants was not the neoliberal reforms themselves, but rather the dissolution of religious and political monopolies and the competition for souls and votes that followed it on behalf of the elites. He argues:

"*Even if we take 1982- the year of Mexico's debt crisis- as the starting point of market-oriented reforms, the fact remains that the cycle began many years before the rise of neoliberalism. In fact, the cycle began as Mexican elites adopted a programme of economic*

[24] As Pacheco-Lopez (2005: 595) summarizes: " *Since the mid-1980s, the propensity to import has exceeded the propensity to export, and this has worsened the growth rate consistent with balanced trade, which is a major explanation of the slowdown of Mexico's growth that was promised by the Mexico's political leaders at the time*".

populism and introduced major political transformations to avoid a major civil war after the 1968 student massacre." (ibid, p.66)

Whether, however, it was the neoliberal shift of the Mexican government or the competition for souls and votes between the Mexican religious and political elites that radicalized the country's peasants, what is certain is that -as it was expected- the effects of this neoliberal shift of the Mexican governments were more intensely felt in the country's poorest region: Chiapas.

Chiapas

Chiapas, at the time of the uprising, was one of the poorest (if not *the poorest*) regions of Mexico, part of what Bonfil Batalla (1996) called *México Profundo* (deepest Mexico). With a population of over 2.200.000 mostly indigenous and mestizo (3% of the country's total population), 70% of whom were living below the poverty line (the national average was 6%) and a 50% unemployment rate, one might assume that Chiapas was a land poor in natural resources. However, that was not the case.

Chiapas was producing 13% of the state's gas, 4% of its oil, 13% of the corn, 5% of its timber, 35% of its coffee, while the region's three dams were producing 55% of the national hydroelectric energy (combined data from Collier and Quaratiello 2005; Vodovnik 2004; Harvey 1998; Brass 2005; Jung 2003; Marcos 2004). At the same time, 33.1% of the homes in Chiapas had no access to electricity (the national average was 12.5%), 41.6% had no access to drinking water (the national average was 27.6%), 58.8% had no drainage (the national average was 36.4%). In addition, 80% of the houses had mud floors, the illiteracy rate was 30% (the national average was 10%) and only 38% of children completed primary school (compared to the national average of 79%) (Harvey 1998, 184). The health services the inhabitants of Chiapas enjoyed were also poor: the infant mortality rate was over 10%,

44% of the population was suffering from malnutrition in the highlands and as much as 80% in the forest, there were only 0.2 clinics per 1000 inhabitants and, as a result, poverty-related, easily-curable diseases killed 15.000 people a year.

However, even though the services that the PRI was providing to the citizens of Chiapas were at best insufficient, Chiapas itself had been providing the PRI with its largest percentage (98-99%) of the vote nationwide (Marcos 2004, 123). That had been achieved through a system of clientelism, electoral fraud and repression, organized by a network of *caciques*[25] who also controlled paramilitary mercenaries (the *Guardias Blancas*) and used them to repress any protests the indigenous population would try to organise. It was not a rare phenomenon either for indigenous leaders to "disappear" or to be found assassinated, as Subcomandante Marcos reminds us in many of his communiqués.

The PRI during the 1930s (under the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas) decided to redistribute thousands of hectares in Chiapas. Of course, the redistribution was remarkably slow since "*the federal government was able to hold out the promise of land reform as a way of retaining peasant loyalty*" (Collier and Quaratiello 2005, 31). In fact, even the idea of land redistribution itself did not belong to the PRI: it was simply the implementation of Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution, which was based on Emiliano Zapata's ideas according to which the land "*belongs to those who work it*" and should be distributed in form of *ejidos*[26]*;* in addition it could not be sold or mortgaged after its redistribution to the people. Here we have to note that the PRI did not actually "redistribute" land, because something like that would entail the removal and re-

[25] Indigenous political bosses who used to control the state projects and used to have a monopoly on transport, markets, and access to credit.

[26] The *ejido* is one of the principal forms of land ownership in Mexico. It is distinct from private property because it is the result of a government land grant (*dotación*) to groups that have applied for land and it is managed collectively through an ejido commission, which defines the use of the ejido lands amongst the members of the ejido. (Harvey 2005b: 648)

distribution of land that belonged to the big landowners of the region. Instead, the government simply opened up national territories in the Lacandon rainforest, in order to relieve the pressure for land without entering into conflict with Chiapas' big landowners (Reyes Ramos 1994: 59, as cited in Nash 2001, 130). Here it should also be noted –because it did indeed play a crucial role in how the events unfolded in the case I am studying- that in 1972, with a Presidential Decree that became known as the *Lacandon community* Decree, 614,321 hectares of land were assigned to 66 Carib families (mistakenly called *Lacandones*), a fact that later on became a source of agrarian conflict in the region. According to Harvey (1998, 80), behind the decree was an agreement between the *lacandones* and the state owned forestry company (COFOLASA) that allowed the latter to exploit 35,000 hectares of mahogany and cedar for ten years. Within the area that was generously donated to the lacandones, however, around 3.000 families of *tseltales* and *tsotsiles* had already settled, to whom the decree denied any land-right.

However, even this "land redistribution" on behalf of the government would have to be reversed in 1992. As a part of the neoliberal reforms the government was promoting, and under the pressure of the NAFTA negotiations, the Mexican state was required to proceed with the privatization of its national industries as well as its natural resources, including land- and Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution was a serious barrier that had to be removed. Most of the theorists of the relevant bibliography (Collier and Collier 2005; Brass 2005; Fitting 2006; Vodovnik 2004; Jung 2003; Collier and Quaratiello 2005; Harvey 1998; Harvey 2005; De León 2005; Ross 2006; Le Bot and Marcos 1997) agree that the amendment of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, which took place in 1992, was the last straw for the people of Chiapas. They had already been exposed to unfair competition regarding their agricultural products (their American competitors were producing cheaper and in bigger quantities due to technological advances) by the liberalization of trade, they had already suffered a reduction in their income due to a serious decline in coffee prices during that period; they had experienced a great deal of militarization in Chiapas since the 1980s (Collier and Collier 2005, 453), and now they had to go through the privatization of

their own land. But –most importantly- the amendment of Article 27 did not only mean that their *ejidos* could now be sold or rented out, but also that no more land claims would be met by the government from that moment on: in practical terms this was the death sentence of the agrarian land reform which had remained in the public agenda and the people's consciousness- as "*the most important legacy of the Mexican Revolution*" (Collier and Quaratiello 2005, 436; Ross 2006, 11). Trejo notes that the reform of article 27 also awoke an old fear for the indigenous peasants of Chiapas, that of the return to the *fincas*:

"*There is compelling evidence to suggest that for several Zapatista combatants and milicianos, the end of six decades of land reform and the liberalization of land tenure meant a major threat or reversion back to the zero-sum agricultural world dominated by fincas, which had enslaved their parents and grandparents for many decades*." (Trejo 2012, 163)

The government, after exploiting and excluding the people of Chiapas for years, was now depriving them of the hope of acquiring a piece of land of their own. In such a context, it was a matter of time for the people of Chiapas to react. And they did: through armed struggle.

Las Fuerzas

Judging from the above, it is not difficult to understand the reasons why the Zapatistas (or the neo-Zapatistas[27], as they are also referred to) decided to take up the arms against the Mexican government and neoliberal globalization. The former was responsible for their impoverishment and total lack of public services, and was also trying to suppress social discontent through the intensified militarization of the region during the years that followed 1980. The latter, on the other hand, had brought about structural changes that made the future of the already marginalized people of Chiapas look even gloomier. As

[27] Some theorists call the movement "*neozapatistas*", viewing them as a continuation of the original Zapatistas (the supporters of Emiliano Zapata) of 1910-1919.

Subcomandante Marcos wrote back then, neoliberal globalization is a cabaret in which *"....the state shows itself as a table dancer that strips of everything until it is left only with the minimum dispensable garments: the repressive force*" (Marcos 1997). In what follows, I will shortly present the historical evolution of EZLN, a well as their ways of autonomous self-organization from below.

What we today know as the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), is a product of the transformation of a previous –very different- revolutionary group that was born in the aftermath of the 1968 Tlatelolco (Plaza de las Tres Culturas, DF) massacre of the Mexican Student Movement: the *Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Forces- FLN from this point onwards).

The FLN were founded on the 6th of August 1969 by César Germán Yáñez Muñoz (*Agustin*, later *Pedro*), Alfredo Zárate (*Marcos*, later *Salvador*), Mario Sánchez Acosta (*Benigno*, later *Manolo*), Mario Sáenz Aguilar (*Abel*, later *Alfredo*), Graciano Sánchez Aguilar (*Teodoro*, later *Gonzalo*), Carlos Vives (*Lucio*, later *Ricardo*) and Raul Pérez Gasque (*Miguel*, later *Alfonso*). Also present were Raul Morales (*Eli*, later *Martin*), César Germán's brother Fernando Yáñez Muñoz (*Leonardo*, later *Germán*), and Mario Sáenz's sister Elisa Irina Sáenz (*Renee*, later *Murcia*) (Harvey 2015, 19). Several of them had previously been members of an even older revolutionary group, the *Ejercito Insurgente Mexicano* (EIM), which had established itself as a guerilla group in the Lacandona Jungle a year earlier with the intention of training itself in the use of weapons in order to lead a national revolution.

EIM was led by journalist Mario Menéndez. According to an account provided by Fernando Yáñez Muñoz himself, the founders of the FLN were not members of the EIM, but had nonetheless been invited into the *selva* before, by "*other structures, people who had gone into other revolutionary activities and wanted to do the same thing but in the*

end did not do it."[28] According to other accounts (De Vos 2002, as cited in Hernandez Millan 2007) the young –at the time- founders of the FLN also belonged to the EIM, but somehow escaped being discovered and imprisoned like the rest of its members. This is the same story recounted by the FLN in the section *Our History* of their internal magazine *Nepantla* of March 1980 (FLN 1980d), where they admit that several of their initial cadres actually did participate in the EIM, an experience which proved to be very useful for them later on, when they went on to found the FLN. According to Neil Harvey (2015, 19), when the FLN were formed its founding mothers and fathers already had a decade of experience in diverse social struggles.

Whether or not they ever belonged to the EIM, the FLN were a classic Marxist-Leninist politico-military revolutionary group influenced by the Castro-Guevarian tradition and the heritage of the Cuban Revolution. In this sense, their target was to overthrow the Mexican government and create a socialist state through the dictatorship of the proletariat phase that would necessarily follow (Cedillo 2008; Le Bot and Marcos 1997). It was comprised of mainly middle-class members, while it had almost no working class membership, and no farmers for members (Le Bot and Marcos 1997). They were very hierarchical, had a vertical military type of organization, and were not particularly democratic in their internal affairs. According to a communiqué published by Compañero Pedro a year after the founding of the group:

"*In short, we have to eliminate three vicious attitudes from the comrades of the EYOL [see later in this chapter]:Democratism (deciding everything), Informism (knowing everything), and Exhibitionism (participating in everything).*" (Compañero Pedro 1970a)

The FLN had something very distinctive that differentiated them from the rest of the similar revolutionary groups of their era: they were antimilitarist in their methods, It sounds ironic for a revolutionary group whose ultimate strategy is the *via armada*,

[28] Interview of Fernando Yáñez Muñoz to La Jornada, as cited by Hernandez Millan (2007, 266; Petrich (2003).

however their anti-militarism lies in that they never engaged in any kind of armed action, and they never committed kidnappings, bank robberies, expropriations or anything of the like; depending on their members only for generating resources. Therefore, the FLN were anti-militarist in the sense that they were avoiding any kind of military confrontation with the state **until** the beginning of the revolution. According to an until recently unknown internal document written by Compañero Pedro in 1969, each member would have to contribute a monthly amount for the maintenance of the organization "without resorting, until further order and only in the cases where it is indicated, to violence" (FLN 1969). The reason, according to Adela Cedillo who has written what is probably the most detailed work on the FLN to date, is that its founders had a specific vision regarding the long-term revolutionary process according to which they would first have to go through an initial preparatory phase, during which they had to create a vanguard of exemplary fighters who would -in the near future- lead the revolution (Cedillo 2010, 12). It is also true that they did not want to risk being identified by committing expropriations, since for them such actions were not worth the risk either politically or economically, taking into account the dangers they would put the organization into (FLN 1980d). For the same reason they advised their members to avoid participating in legal, democratic struggles like marches or –in the cases that they could not avoid doing so- to participate quietly, observing and detecting "the most honest and discreet persons" that they could possibly later recruit for their cause. However, they were advised to be extremely careful in order to avoid "burning themselves" by being identified by the state forces (Abraham (FLN) 1979). Compañero Pedro summarised the stance of the FLN towards open, legal, struggles in a communiqué he published in 1970:

"…one peso is more beneficial for the organization than all the protests, marches, pamphlets or peaceful forms of resistance because it represents a bullet or a drug (which means one more day in effective combat); five minutes of participation in a mission, or in the capture of a candidate, bring us closer to victory than a nine-month strike, [which is] lost from the outset." (Compañero Pedro 1972)

The revolutionary strategy they selected was that of *núcleo guerillero* (Petrich 2003)[29], loyal to their Guevarista roots, according to which a small vanguard guerrilla group could become the nucleus that could lead to (and literally lead) a national revolution, just like what happened in Cuba. Subcomandante Marcos, in an interview with Yvon Le Bot, described this vision of the FLN as follows:

"*Its plan was not to prepare the war, the beginning of war, but to be prepared for it when the war begins***...***to appear when it would be necessary. The idea is that the people would need in that instance an armed group to defend them, to fight, to resist the actions of the federal army, the army of the government."*(Le Bot and Marcos 1997-author's translation from Spanish)

So they chose the *Selva Lacandona* as their theatre of operations, and they established a small rebel group there that they called *Núcleo Guerillero Emiliano Zapata* (NGEZ) in 1972. In that small group there were also two indigenous, one *tojolabal* and one *lacandón*[30], but two years later their training ranch *El Chilar* (ejido Diamante near Ocosingo) was discovered and most of the NGEZ members left for the *selva* (Petrich 2003), where they were most probably killed[31] in battle with the army (Hernandez Millan 2007;

[29] Other analysts (Cedillo 2010) speak of *foco* guerillero, or foquismo, but Fernando Yáñez denies it: "We formed a *núcleo* guerillero…I think Ché Guevara never used the word *foco*" (Petrich 2003- author's translation from Spanish)

[30] Indigenous Maya nations.

[31] It should be noted here that for most of the members of the NGEZ their fate still remains unknown. While for some of them it is known that they were arrested at some point by the army or the police- even the date and place of detention is known in some cases- we still do not know what happened to them afterwards. Some surviving members of the FLN –including the brother of César Germán Yáñez Muñoz, Fernando- have established an organization that preserves the history of the FLN and investigates the fate of its missing members. They call it *Casa de Todas y Todos*.

Cedillo 2010). What is important to note here is that according to an army report some indigenous *ejidatarios* of Cintalapa (near Ocosingo) had informed the army of the presence of an armed group of around 12 people in the area (Cedillo 2010) which gradually led to the discovery of their encampment.

Therefore, it seems that the Lacandona Jungle had already been chosen by 1969 (or even earlier if we consider the EIM as the –*grand*mother organization of the EZLN) as a theatre of operations because it was minimally integrated with the Mexican State while the Federal State was rather weak as well, and –it was believed- that through the effects of Liberation theology that had already reached the selva, the people there would be easier to be approached by a group of a revolutionary nature. The fact that Liberation theology had already reached the Lacandona jungle was seen as a positive factor by the FLN in the sense that Liberation theologists had already problematized historical questions of human rights and social and economic disadvantage in the region, thus preparing the ground for the FLN's prognostic framing of the solution: armed revolution (O'Connor and Oikonomakis 2015, 387). In addition, according to *Nepantla* (FLN 1980, no.9, p.10), the internal instrument of communication of the FLN, Chiapas was an area where exploitation, misery, insalubrity, and ignorance were so prevalent that its people were considered to be ideal to form support bases for a revolutionary group. The fact that the *selva* was also dense and inapproachable, along with its proximity the Isthmus of Tehuatepec that could potentially make the formation of a liberated area easier thus splitting the country in two (the distance between the Pacific and the Atlantic ocean is very small in that region), made the natural territory ideal for the establishment of a liberated zone that could also be connected with other countries of Central America (ibid.). There was also an additional issue: the region was known to be rich in oil reserves, and the FLN were hoping that they would use them for the benefit of the people once they would take power. In their own words:

"*What determines that selection? To begin with, political factors. The inhabitants of those distant mountains were living in a state of such exploitation and misery, of such insalubrity and ignorance, that they constituted the ideal material to form support bases for the politico-military activities of a rebel group. Their long tradition of struggle against domination, their strong spirit of collectivity that has been developed as a defensive mechanism against the capitalist penetration, the fiery repression they had been secular victims of, everything, signalled to us that it was a sector which has a world to win with the socialist revolution, and nothing to lose but its misery…And then there is the terrain. Steep, mountainous, densely vegetated (a helicopter would have to lower a lot –putting itself in danger- in order to try to see what is below those immense caobos, ceibas, and huapaques [trees of the region])….There was also an important reason of military strategy: it was close to the isthmus[32], which constitutes a natural territorial characteristic, which is favourable for a division of the country that would permit the consolidation of a liberated zone with the idea of connecting itself with Centroamerica. The recent events in that region (Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Costa Rica) have only confirmed the justification of those revisions. On the other hand, in the region of the Isthmus there is a big concentration of indigenous populations, whose misery makes them fertile ground for the revolution. And finally, the oil-wealth, which even though it was not exploited back then with the intensity it is today, was nonetheless awakening the greed of the capitalists. It was clear ten years ago and now even more, that the oil can only be used for the benefit of the people when they take power."* (FLN 1980b- author's translation from Spanish)

According to an interview a former Subcomandante of EZLN gave to *Letras Libres* much later:

"The soldiers did not go there, therefore they [the FLN] could do things without any problems. It is a place that they already knew. The group of Cesar Yáñez, the founder of the FLN, had been there in the early seventies. His vision was that Chiapas was an apt place

[32] This refers to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, a region which is comprised of parts of the states of Oaxaca, Chiapas, Tabasco, and Veracruz, in which the distance between the Atlantic and the Pacific coast is only 215 kilometers.

for a guerrilla, the Selva Lacandona specifically, because it is a closed place, of difficult access." (DelaGrange and Rico 1999- author's translation from Spanish)

But while the strategic choice of Chiapas would prove to be correct around twenty years later, in those early years the group of the NGEZ was discovered and exterminated by the army in 1974, and César Germán Yáñez Muñoz was among the dead of this operation[33]. Earlier on in the same year, on 14 February, the FLN would suffer another major blow; this time in the village of Nepantla, between Mexico City and Puebla (Estado de Mexico), where they had set up a safe-house that they called *la Casa Grande*. The safe-house was invaded by the army and the FLN would lose another five of their leading members, while only two survived (*Martin* and *Elisa*). *Salvador*, *Sol*, *Gabriel*, *Maria-Luisa*, and *Manolo* were killed during the operation[34] (Segretaria de Gobernacion 1974). It would seem that *Salvador*, second in command at the time, had with him in Nepantla documents related to the training ranch of the FLN in Chiapas, through which the army managed to locate it and organize the operation *Diamante* that led to the annihilation of the NGEZ (Interview of Fernando Yanez with Petrich 2003). The FLN themselves though, seem to have connected the discovery of the Nepantla safe-house (and eventually also the discovery of the NGEZ encampment) with treason- that of two FLN members who had been caught and tortured by the police just 34 hours earlier: Nora Rivera and Napoleón Glockner. It also seems that Nora Rivera and Napoleón Glockner accompanied the police and army forces to the *Casa Grande* in Nepantla during the November 14 1974 operation. According to the FLN, *Aurora* (Julieta Glockner), Napoleón's sister, arrived at the safe

[33] The FLN, as well as the EZLN, never accepted the fact that the members of the NGEZ have passed away. They prefer to still consider them "desaparecidos".

[34] As Cedillo notes in her research, and I also observed during my fieldwork, there is a certain reluctance on the part of the FLN/EZLN members to accept the possibility of the death of their comrades. "*Your thinking is right, they may be dead*", I was told by a Zapatista friend during my fieldwork, "*But let's call them 'disappeared', because if you call them 'dead', you are killing them already in your mind*" (author's fieldwork notes, Summer 2012). Subcomandante Marcos also follows this tendency: in a speech on 17 November 2006, he mentions the fallen heroes of EZLN, describing some of them - César Germán Yáñez Muñoz for example- as *desaparecidos*. The 14th of February is the day the EZLN still commemorates its fallen heroes.

house a few hours after the events and was able to see and observe the events personally without being caught (Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional 1976b). And treason is not something the FLN would forgive: according to an internal confidential communication of 1976, after receiving relevant orders from the leadership, FLN militants executed Napoleón Glockner and Nora Rivera, for having betrayed the safe-house of Nepantla to the police:

"*Two years, two hundred and sixty five days later, the ones who are responsible for the treason paid with their lives…On the 5th of past November, militants of the FLN executed Napoleón Glockner and Nora Rivera, who in the year of 1974 had denounced the place where the Central safe-house of our Organization was situated, in Nepantla*." (Compañero Alfredo 1976)

However, according to Napoleón Glockner's sister Minerva, it was not the FLN that assassinated her brother and Nora Rivera, but the police (El Proceso 1995b) and the communiqué of the FLN regarding their "supposed execution" by the organization itself is false and fabricated by the police. She also claims, that when she was asked to identify the bodies of her brother and his companion Nora Rivera, they both had signs of torture on their bodies which she believes were done by the police. Napoleón's son from his first wedding, Fritz, also agrees with the version of his aunt (El Proceso 1995a).

It is interesting to note here that if this event is true, this would not have been the first time that the FLN executed an ex-member for treason. A similar mission had taken place earlier, in 1971, against a member of the Special Works division of the FLN who had deserted:

"…[it] was processed the capture, disarmament, and later on execution of the deserter, for grave violations of discipline and demoralization; a mission that was executed by our militants with all security [measures], in a humanitarian form, and [he was] buried in a

place known only to the members of the aforementioned commission." (Compañero Pedro 1971-author's translation from Spanish)

The decision to execute the members that the FLN considered as "traitors" was already taken as far back as 1972, as a communiqué signed by Compañero Pedro signifies:

"…the defensive attitude of our organization towards the despicable adventurous elements, the opportunists, or the traitors that come to her has changed; it has been proceeded to locate [them] in order to capture and execute the most dangerous [of them], with the aim of safeguarding the progress of our works and the life of our militants." (Compañero Pedro 1972) (author's translation from Spanish)

It is very difficult to know whether these communiqués are original or whether they were actually fabricated by the police, as Napoleón Glockner's family members argue. What we definitively are in a position to know, however, is the fact that over the course of just one year, the FLN lost their base in the Selva Lacandona, their safe-house in Nepantla, a large number of their members including their leader César Germán Yáñez Muñoz, and had to re-organize and start again from scratch. *Mario Marcos* describes the situation in an article he wrote later in *Nepantla* (Mario (FLN) 1980) commemorating *Gonzalo:*

"*I met Pacha [Gonzalo] shortly after the events of Nepantla, when the blow of repression put us in a difficult organizational situation. Those were really difficult moments, the survival of the organization or its disappearance were dependent on the same line: we had abandoned all the safe houses that were more likely to be detected by the enemy in order for all of us to concentrate in one, all the professional militants. In that meeting was our immediate survival or the risk to succumb, and that house was not free of dangers*." (author's translation from Spanish)

Fernando Yáñez Muñoz, the brother of César Germán, replaced his brother in the leadership and later adopted his *nom de guerre:* he would become Comandante *Germán*

of the FLN and the EZLN[35]. At this moment the leadership was comprised of three members: “Germán”, who was responsible for the Tabasco network of the group, *Alfredo*, who was the communications specialist, and *Juan*, responsible for the network of Veracruz (Shapiro 2000).

Therefore, while in 1974 the Mexican State under the presidency of Luis Echeveria was determined to put an end to the grievances that remained open since 1968 with a new electoral reform that reduced the electoral threshold to 1.5% of the vote thus –in theory at least- facilitating minority representation, the FLN had already been radicalized to the point of no return. So they rejected both the electoral reform, and the Amnesty Law that followed in 1978 (destined to serve the more than 800 political prisoners and the 400 “disappeared” all over the country) considering that **their** political opportunities remained closed: “*The causes of our founding continue to exist, despite the pretentious electoral reform and the populist masking of the state*”, they state in their *Nepantla* magazine published in 1977 (FLN 1977).

1974-1980- Reorganization and new attempts for the *selva*

From 1974 and until 1977, the FLN reorganized themselves and tried to establish a permanent encampment in the *Selva* while at the same time they keep searching for the *desaparecidos* of the NGEZ. On at least three occasions they sent explorative missions, however, on at least three occasions they failed.

[35] It was kind of a tradition for the FLN to adopt the pseudonyms of their fallen comrades, as a way of keeping their memory alive. Subcomandante Marcos himself, who entered the FLN as *Zacarias*, would later adopt the *nom de guerre* of a fallen comrade of his, Mario-Marcos. The same is the case for the legendary Subcomandante *Pedro*, who adopted his own pseudonym in honour of César Germán Yáñez Muñoz (Compañero Pedro). (Sellschopp 2004, 92)

The first effort took place at the end of 1974, beginning of 1975, but ended without glory: after a few months in the *Selva*, and having already been demoralized by the disheartening living conditions, at least two members of the FLN died in a gun related accident, which led to the abandonment of the exploration as well as to some desertions (Cedillo 2010).

The same bad fortune (or bad planning) follows the FLN between 1975 and 1983, a period during which at least three more of their members die, mostly in accidental clashes with the police, or due to taking insufficient security measures (ibid). Thus, on 6 February 1975 *Gonzalo* and *Aurora* are accidentally checked by the police in Villahermosa, they lose control and shoot them, and trying to escape from the city, a nearby army patrol also gets involved, and eventually *Gonzalo* gets shot and *Aurora* heroically prefers to die fighting rather than being caught. *La Casa de Todas y Todos* would later on dedicate one of its editorial notes to Aurora, in which they state that before joining the FLN she had been to Cuba, while she had also been involved with the Gueatemalteco Liberation movement. She was one of the few urban *guerilleros* of the FLN who had been assigned a gun to protect herself, a gun that she would later use against herself, in a heroic effort not to be caught by the police (Casa de Todas y Todos 2016). In 1977, the FLN make yet another attempt to establish an encampment in the *Selva*, which again ends tragically: *Alfredo*, *Ismael*, *Ana*, *Urbano*, and *Mario* set off for yet another explorative visit, but *Alfredo* gets injured accidentally, starts losing blood yet refuses to be taken to a hospital, and in the end dies of blood loss. Again the FLN decide to abandon the operation, and again they have members who leave the organization (*Urbano*, *Mario*, *Susana*, and *Ruth* amongst them[36])(Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional 1977; Shapiro 2000; Cedillo 2010). In 1978, the FLN made another attempt to return to the *Selva*, which again failed, causing one more desertion, leaving the organization in a very difficult position with most of its members having either died or deserted, having very few “professional rebels” left -who must also have been massively demoralized- a destroyed network of contacts and safe-houses, no

[36] Mario and Ruth would re-join later on.

guerrilla movement in the *Selva* after a number of failed attempts, and an urgent need for re-organization and recruitment.

1978- 1982 Recruitment and learning from past mistakes

Having learnt their lesson, realizing that they need to start recruiting and re-building their networks once again, and conscious now that in order to establish themselves in the *selva* they would need local contacts, between 1978 and 1980 the FLN mainly focus their work on two issues: a) installing a safe-house in San Cristobal de las Casas and establishing a relationship of trust with the indigenous communities; and b) recruiting new members for their revolutionary vanguard to replace those that had died or deserted.

Regarding the latter, loyal to their vanguard-formation plan, they did not intend to conduct massive recruitment at the time but rather to approach students and professors from Universities that had a reputation for their Marxist orientation, such as the UAM, (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana) and the UNACH (Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo). This is the period during which two of the future Subcomandantes of the EZLN were recruited: *Zacarias* (future *Marcos*), and *Daniel*, both from the UAM (DelaGrange and Rico 1999) among others. These new recruits would fulfil the duties of the three possible categories of membership the FLN had: a) that of the "professionals", who were people who had dedicated their life to the cause of the revolution, had left their families and work and were prepared to become part of the guerilla movement and move to the *selva*,

b) that of the "militantes urbanos" (urban militants), who were the people who maintained the safe-houses in the cities, and worked in order to provide resources for the "professionals", and

c) that of the "collaborators", who were the people that would assist both the "professionals" and the "militantes urbanos", without belonging fully to any of the two categories.

As far as the political work in Chiapas is concerned, the first safe-house in San Cristobal de las Casas was installed, through which the FLN were hoping to establish a network of contacts with the indigenous communities via projects of community work (alphabetization, first-aid, etc.). The first *ejido* the FLN approached was that of Lázaro Cárdenas, which had built a reputation for itself as one of the most radical and politically active in the region (Cedillo 2010), and which apparently had in the past been involved in a peaceful occupation of 190 hectares of land that belonged to a rich landowner and army captain, only to be brutally repressed by the Mexican army shortly after[37]. The FLN approached the *ejidatarios* of Lázaro Cardenas sometime between 1978 and 1980 and made an agreement with them: the indigenous would provide the FLN with assistance and recruits, and the FLN would teach the indigenous new skills that they did not possess, such as the use of weapons among others. All of the above under one condition: that the FLN would respect the Catholic faith of the indigenous of the area, which they did and still do[38]. But since the authorities of the *ejido* were already too well known in the area to pass into clandestine life and "disappear", they agreed to dedicate to the cause the youngest members of the *ejido*; their sons and daughters. In this way, a number of 11-14 year olds are taken to the safe-house of San Cristobal, with the agreement that if they didn't like the clandestine life, they could leave.

Training and political formation

In the safe-house *Victor*, *Mario Marcos*, and *Sofia* among others, taught them Spanish, to read and write, maths, history, geography, politics, cooking, driving, trained them in the use of weapons, as well as in skills that would be useful for the organization in

[37] The government sent in more than 1000 soldiers on 10 June 1976 and killed dozens of indigenous chol and tsotsil, threw two of them into the river from helicopters, raped women, imprisoned hundreds of others etc.

[38] It is indicative that during my fieldwork in Chiapas (summer 2012), there was a new church being constructed in one of the Zapatista *caracoles*.

the future (shoemaking, tanning, tailoring, electronics, mechanics etc.), and of course Marxism. In addition to all these, with the use of videos and documentaries that the FLN themselves started making, they tried to introduce the national character of the struggle to them, and the fact that it was about the rest of the country as well and not only about Chiapas (which they did not know at the time). The first indigenous recruits were *Pancho* or *Frank*, *Moisés*, *Jorge*, *Petul*, Javier, *Cecilia*, *Yolanda*, *Mario*, *Alfredo* and *Benjamin* and some of them would later reach the position of Majors (*Yolanda*, later *Ana Maria*, for example) and Subcomandantes (*Moisés)* of the EZLN. (Cedillo 2010; DelaGrange and Rico 1999) Once their training was complete, the "students" would return to their villages in order to become themselves "instructors" for the new students/recruits[39].

In 1979 the FLN also decided to start a new "publication" that they used for internal communication only, which they called *Nepantla*, from the town in which their comrades were killed in 1974, and its first publication coincided with the day of commemoration of their deaths: 14 February 1979[40]. 1979 is a very important year for the FLN for one more reason: the triumph of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. The effect this had to the FLN was enormous: first, it reassured them that the road to social change they had selected was correct; and secondly, it massively boosted their recruitment process. Consequently they first order their guerrillas to be prepared, just in case the USA attacked Nicaragua to go and assist, while they also sent some representatives to the country to assist the Sandinistas in their new government duties and development projects; without

[39] The EZLN uses the same system of self-teaching in their autonomous education system. The students themselves become *promotores* (promoters of education), and leave for their villages in order to train the next students. In addition, similar to the –seemingly successful- strategy of the first recruitments, the graduates of the Zapatista Education, acquire several skills (agroecology, shoemaking, medicine, communication etc.), which become the knowledge that they transmit to their own communities.

[40] There was a section called "Nuestros Heroes" (Our Heroes) in "Nepantla". The FLN/EZLN still do not forget to honour their fallen comrades. In some of the Zapatista caracoles one can still see photographs of them, while there is also a Zapatista song comprised by EZLN members dedicated to them, which is called "Heroes y Martyres" (Heroes and Martyrs).

receiving any special training there though. Henck (2007), argues that almost all of the leading cadres of the FLN, including Zacarias/Marcos, visited Nicaragua at that time.

The statutes

In 1980, the Statutes of the FLN (FLN 2003) were published. They are comprised of 11 chapters, 72 articles, in a total of 42 pages, in which they stated that according to their political analysis the state would only permit the legal existence "*of the organizations that do not seriously propose –in theory and practice- an end to the capitalist exploitation*." Therefore, a politico-military organization like theirs, had to "*take the political power of the Mexican Republic, in order to install a Popular Socialist Republic".* In the same Statutes, the FLN define three dimensions for their struggle:

a) the politico-economic: which focused on the creation of the political organizations that would lead the revolution
b) the politico-military: which had to do with installing themselves in places where the people would be ready to take up the arms, since "the democratic paths had failed"
c) the ideological: which was about the application of Marxism in the Mexican reality, according to its customs, history, and culture, and not in its orthodox form.

The same Statutes, Chapter IV to be more specific, announced the birth of the EZLN, with the intention of it becoming the base of a future Popular Army. There is also a reference to the indigenous, and a recognition of their right to self-manage their territories according to their ways of organization and action. In addition, the Statutes define the organizational structure of the FLN:

a) At the top there is the National Direction

and at the base,

b) the EZLN in the rural areas and
c) c) the Students and Workers in Struggle in the urban (Estudiantes Y Obreros en la Lucha- EYOL) (ibid.)

At that point, the group had four networks of support all over the country:

a) The Southeastern: with bases in Chiapas and Tabasco.
b) The Northeastern: based in Chihuahua.
c) The Northern: based in Nuevo Leon.
d) The Central: based in DF and nearby areas.

EYOL

According to confidential communiqué signed by Compañero Pedro in 1970, the role of the EYOL was as follows :

"*The EYOL form an exclusively integrant part of the FLN, their work is realized in the localities in which they are situated and their aim is to assist the NGEZ, being subordinated to it, and depending on their National responsible and he/she with his own turn on the Direction of the FLN. Their organization is of vertical military type, their work is clandestine and has two targets: supply, information, and propagation of the FLN; and distraction and harassment of the governing oligarchy and their allies*." (Compañero Pedro 1970b)

The EYOL were *also* responsible for actions relating to sabotage and executions, through their Special division (Especiales).

In 1980, the FLN decided to make yet another effort to establish themselves in the *Selva*, under the leadership of *Raul* (*Germán*), *Ismael*, and *Alicia* (*Elisa*). After a couple of months in the *selva*, and while *Ismael* was returning to the safe-house in the *El Bayito*

rancho of Villahermosa, he was shot –possibly by *Abraham* who may have been an infiltrator- yet managed to inform *Olivia* and she left the safe-house. *Ismael*, who was also –it appears- “revolutionarily married” to *Alicia* died in the attack, and this proved to be another strong blow for the FLN. A series of desertions followed, and the third in command was now dead. *Alicia* took his place in the group hierarchy, while the safe-house in *El Bayito* was discovered and searched.

Two years later, in 1982, after having learnt the bitter lessons from their past experiences, the FLN embarked on yet another explorative journey in the *Selva*, this time along with some of their indigenous recruits. The members of this explorative mission, “the selection phase” as Subcomandante Marcos calls it (Marcos 2008), were *Raul*, *Victor*, and *Alicia* (who by now had changed their names to *Germán*, *Rodrigo*, and *Elisa*), *Javier*, *Jorge*, and *Frank*. They spent a couple of months in the Selva, identifying possible encampment spots, and returned to the safe-houses to prepare for the following year’s permanent placement attempt. However, before that could happen, yet another serious blow struck the FLN: on 26 May 1983, *Mario-Marcos*, the Chihuahua network head of the FLN, found himself in a battle with the police in Puebla, where he was intending to meet a Porto Rican *guerillero*, and died. *Ruth*, who also happened to be in the city, was discovered and killed in a Puebla safe-house as well, however the police did not identify them as FLN members, but rather as assistant and partner of the Puerto Rican *guerillero* (McFadden 1983a; McFadden 1983b). The then New York times correspondent in Mexico described the event as follows:

“*This account, quoting the Puebla District Attorney's office and witnesses, said two police officers were wounded and Mr. Morales's companion was killed in a gun battle at the cafeteria. Then, it said, Mr. Morales was seized by a third officer…*

…They said that two of the Mexican police officers were wounded, one critically, and that one of Mr. Morales's companions, identified by authorities in Puebla as Adelaido Villafranco Contreras, was shot dead in the gunfight. The second companion was said to

have escaped with the band of rescuers, but the police managed to hold on to Mr. Morales, who was not injured.

Later Thursday, according to the New York officials, the Mexican Federal police raided a house in Cholula, a small town near Puebla, where Mr. Morales was said to have lived recently. In the ensuing gun battle, the woman described as Mr. Morales's common-law wife, Patricia Judith Vidrio Anguiano, was killed, and her child was wounded." (McFadden 1983a)

Despite the misfortunes that kept stalking them, however, the persistence of the FLN finally bore fruit: On 17 November 1983, six FLN members, five men and one woman, three mestizos and three indigenous (the same who made the explorative journey in 1982), disguised as PEMEX workers set off from different safe-houses, met in Ocosingo, and headed for the *Selva*. Later that evening, they established their first encampment, which they called *La Garrapata*[41] and the person responsible for keeping the diary (*Alfa*, 18 years old) wrote:

"*November 17, 1983…We ate half a can of tuna and tortillas…We slept with the intention of getting up early. The moon shone, and it didn't rain. Altitude: 640 meters. First encampment."* (FLN 1983)

In this way, "*without any special formal ceremony*" (Henriquez 2009; Marcos 2008), what until then existed only in the Fourth Chapter of the FLN Statutes and the imagination of its members, became reality: the EZLN. At the end of the "Implantation phase" (ibid.), and while the group moved to another area, deeper in the *selva*[42] and established the

[41] Because of the numerous such bugs in the area.

[42] "*The indigenous told us…that not even God goes there!...not even us the indigenous live there*" would say later on Subcomandante Marcos (Le Bot and Marcos 1997).

second encampment that they named *La Cojola*, and the third that they called *La Pesadilla* (The Nightmare), *Germán* and *Rodrigo* left the *sleva* to return to their duties as National Directors in the cities, and *Elisa* became the legendary first *Comandanta* of the EZLN.

1983-1994 EZLN: From "solitude" to "absolute control"

At this time, with some rebels occasionally going up and down from the *Selva* to the cities, the EZLN had seven permanent members established in the *Selva* (Marcos 2008), while eight more would arrive the following year (*Yolanda*, *Josue*, *Pedro*, *Marcos*, *Benjamin*, *Mario*, *Daniel*, one indigenous chol, and one tsotsil), increasing the number of the EZLN rebels to between 12 and 15 by the end of 1984. (Marcos 2008; DelaGrange and Rico 1999) In 1984, thanks mainly to the efforts of the indigenous members of the group, the EZLN acquires its first Base of Support (*Base de Apoyo del EZLN*- BAEZLN): the community *Tierra y Libertad,* which belonged to the greater *ejido* Lázaro Cardenas.

From 1983 until 1985, in a phase that Subcomandante Marcos calls "Solitary"/ "Survival" (Marcos 2008; Le Bot and Marcos 1997), the group of rebels had to learn how to survive in the *selva* (to hunt, to fish, etc.). Since most of them had not even slept in an hammock before (DelaGrange and Rico 1999), while they were studying military strategy and history from U.S and Mexican army manuals, they were also training themselves in topography, exploring the area, and waiting for the Revolution to come. These were the years of solitude:

"*It was the island of Robinson Crusoe, there was no one to send bottles to, no Friday, nothing…We were passing night close to the communities, we were underground. Because they were hunting us, they thought we were cow-thieves, or bandits or witches. Many of those who are now* compañero*s or even* comandantes*, in those times were going after us because they thought we were bad people. Apart from the first politicized indigenous, [who*

were] not even 10 people [in total], no one else was assisting us." (Le Bot and Marcos 1997, 59- author's translation from Spanish)

During the years that followed, and more specifically from 1986 till 1989, the EZLN passed into a stage during which it started becoming visible in the communities. Thanks to the indigenous of the group who acted as translators, they established contacts with the communities which helped them in any way they could, providing them with supplies that they would bring from the city, and even with food that would come from their own production, and little by little, entire families and villages shared in "the secret" of the EZLN and became part of it.

"The indigenous of the group make the first contacts: Frank, Josue, Yolanda, that now is the Mayor Anna Maria, also recruited in the Altos, in the zone of Huitiupan....The communities don't see Marquitos, don't see Germán , don't see Elisa...they see an indigenous." "Daniel" would comment after his desertion. (DelaGrange and Rico 1999- author's translation from Spanish)

By this time (since 1984 to be more specific), as Marcos reminds us, the indigenous already formed a majority within the group, had transformed the relationship between the communities and the EZLN into an organic one, and the EZLN had already entered the process of its own "indigenization":

"*At this stage the EZLN was no longer what we had conceived when we arrived. By then we had been defeated by the indigenous communities, and as a product of that defeat, the EZLN started to grow exponentially and to become "very otherly…"*(Le Bot and Marcos 1997)

The next –and most successful- phase for the EZLN began in 1988 and it is the phase that witnesses "the boom of Zapatismo". From this moment onwards, the EZLN started exercising absolute control over the *Selva*, but also expanded its reach beyond that: to the regions of North and Los Altos. By this time, the members of the FLN who previously had to pass near the communities in the dark, were now moving openly from community to community, had recruited a considerable number of combatants, but also had started doing social work in the communities: they built clinics, work collective *milpas* (corn fields), constructed meeting spaces, basketball courts (for some strange reason almost every Zapatista community has one)[43], even parks for children! Just to give an idea of how big the EZLN had grown by this stage, it suffices to mention that in 1989 it mobilized 1200 combatants to build a clinic, by 1991 it mobilized 4000 men in a military exercise, while the following year it could get 5000 men together in a military parade for the celebration of the 500 years of resistance (Le Bot and Marcos 1997, 75; Marcos 2008). But what explains this extraordinary growth of the movement? *"…I can't say why exactly; we think it is because we did our work well*", Subcomandante Marcos would confess to Yvon Le Bot, also mentioning some other factors that according to him played a role:

a) The electoral fraud of 1988 against Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (Salinas won the elections) which further undermined the belief in social change through electoral politics amongst the indigenous,
b) A recent drop in the coffee prices,
c) A number of epidemics that hit the *Selva* taking the lives of many children,
d) A number of assassinations carried out by the Guardias Blancas,
e) the intrusion of the army on the *Selva* on the look out for marijuana, and their awkwardness and inability to exist in the *selva* which radicalized the indigenous and undermined the army in their eyes, and –most importantly-
f) the reform of Article 27 of the Constitution by Salinas.

[43] The explanation I received during my fieldwork (summer, 2012) was that basketball pitches serve multiple purposes: community meetings, parades, celebrations, and of course for…the game itself!

It is not clear which of the above weighed heavier in the Chiapanecos' decision to join the FLN/EZLN, however the reform of Article 27 seems to have had an additional future impact. Not only would *ejidos* now be open to privatization, but also no more land redistribution would take place in Mexico from now on.

> "…*So now there was no more hope, it was over. Only the armed path was left*." (Le Bot and Marcos 1997, 73- author's translation from Spanish)

Apparently, a very critical moment for what today is the EZLN however, took place in 1992, when the leaders of the indigenous communities expressed to the *Comandancia* of the EZLN their determination to go to war.

"*We were thinking what I told you the other day, that the conditions were not there, that the international situation was not favorable; the national situation was also very unfavorable for any intent for change, even more for armed struggle. So we decided to hold the first consultation of what would later become the work-line of the Zapatistas in the villages*." (Le Bot and Marcos 1997, 80- author's translation from Spanish)

The consultation took place in September, October, and the first half of November 1992 in 400-500 communities, while it was the first time that the women[44] were also asked to give their opinion, as well as the youth –who until then did not participate in the communal decisions. And the decision was clear: the war had to start. (ibid.)

(Ex)Subcomandante *Daniel*, who by that time was not in the *selva* but had been transferred to San Cristobal (according to his own account), confirms that the decision was taken by popular vote, although he attributes it to the "manipulative skills" of

[44] While it seems that in the course of the struggle gender roles were re-interpreted and the emancipation of women was slowly being achieved, and even thought this is an extremely interesting development, further exploration of this issue is however beyond the scope of this research. The reason is that the issue is so extended that it would require a whole new thesis to be written on it only.

Subcomandante Marcos (DelaGrange and Rico 1999). By that time *Elisa*, who had the command of the EZLN since 1984, had left the *selva*, and *Germán* had passed the military command of the EZLN to Subcomandante Marcos. Two other members had also risen to rank of Subcomandante by now: *Pedro*, and *Daniel* (Shapiro 2000). On 12 October 1992, in an indigenous march for the 500 years of Indigenous Resistance that ended with the destruction of the statute of the –*conquistador*- founder of San Cristobal De Las Casas Diego de Mazariegos. Amongst the 10.000-15.000-big crowd, 5.000-6.000 were undercover members of the EZLN.

With the decision to go to war already taken, all that remained to be done was to inform and persuade the leadership of the FLN about it. On 23-25 January 1993 (DelaGrange and Rico 1999; Cedillo 2010; Le Bot and Marcos 1997; Shapiro 2000), in one of the Zapatista communities, at the school of the village of Prado, Ocosingo Municipality (Henck 2007), a meeting took place between the leadership of the FLN, the indigenous community leaders (what would later become the CCRI –Indigenous Clandestine Revolutionary Committee) [45] , and the leadership of the EZLN, during which the communities' decision was announced and debated. Marcos and the indigenous leaders also make a call for a more democratic decision-making process within the organization itself:

"A meeting was organized with representatives of the compañeros *of the city, of the regular troops of insurgents, and the communities of the villages which took place in January 1993. In this meeting the possibility of the war was discussed, because this was an initiative of the indigenous communities, which of course had no echo in the city. If we saw it with scepticism, the city did even more so, because they had more access to information....After a long discussion that lasted various days, it was agreed that the*

[45] Fernando Yanez says that there were 200-300 representatives of Zapatista communities. He also mentions that the whole process was filmed, but the videos are being kept outside Mexico. (Interview with Petrich 2003). In an interview he conducted with the author of this thesis he repeated that the whole process was filmed and that the FLN still have that video which confirms his words.

politico-military organization [the FLN] had to give in, had to opt for a democratic decision making mechanism in which the majority of the organization decides how it is to continue, and the majority were the communities. So the indigenous representatives, leaders by all means, referred to the result of the consultation that voted for war… that the communities had voted for. In that way, they took the lead, in a formal manner, of the EZLN. They became the comandancia of the army; and the responsibles of the ethnic zone took the name, the rhythm and the work of the CCRI" Marcos would argue later on. (Le Bot and Marcos 1997- author's translation from Spanish)

Adela Cedillo (2010, 220) and Nick Henck (2007) both describe this process as the "*coup d'etat*" of Marcos to the FLN, while ex-Subcomandante Daniel (DelaGrange and Rico 1999) also emphasizes the role of Marcos in it ("…*it was a trick of Guillén*").

Whatever the exact details around this meeting, what is sure is that it marks the passage of the leadership from the cities, Germán, and the FLN, to the indigenous people in the jungles, Marcos, and the EZLN. According to all relevant accounts this shift of leadership also led to yet more additional desertions (including the second in national command, *Rodrigo* –ex *Juan*). Yet, the first in command, *Germán*, decided to support Marcos and the CCRI. In an interview I conducted with el *arquitecto*, ex-Comandante *Germán,* Fernando Yanez, he told me the following when I posed him this question:

"*In Prado, in 1993, it was agreed through a General Assembly to start the armed struggle and nobody was opposed to that proposal. Fortunately, the FLN possess the video that confirms what I am telling you. One day, all the interested historians will see it. Don't take*

into account the novels (novelas) or the bad stories that the Mexican government is promoting." (Interview with Fernando Yanez, 13 January 2016)[46]

Now everything was in place for the start of the Revolution. However, what spoilt the plan slightly was the first clash between the EZLN and the army that took place at Corralchen, near Ocosingo, in May 1993. Earlier that year, two soldiers had been killed together with a Zapatista lieutenant. Their burnt bodies were discovered, and the army had been exploring to find out who had done it. That exploration led them to the discovery of the EZLN camp *Las Calabazas* (The Pumpkins), a camp equipped with six wooden dormitories capable of holding 200 men, trenches, parapets, replica tanks, an electric generator, and a model of a military installation near Ocosingo (Henck 2007, 171). According to Marcos, because of this battle (as well as some of Marcos' videos from the Zapatista training that were discovered in the camp), the army was informed of the existence of the rebels (they were expecting a small group of 40-60 people) and they were already preparing a counterrevolutionary offensive in the *Selva*. This fact, together with the strategically convenient imminent New Year's Eve, forced the EZLN to speed up the beginning of the war.

"*We knew that they were preparing a contra-guerilla offensive, for a guerilla group of 40-60 people, between 6 and 10 January in the Selva. We got to know that towards the end of December, the 25th, or the 28th, so we decided that we had do it now because if they were expecting us, we'd have to fight inside* [the Selva]" (Le Bot and Marcos 1997, 87)

The plan was to last until the elections at least (August 1994), because for them to take place the government would have to make a truce (ibid.). According to Salvador Morales Garibay (ex-"Daniel"), it was not only the battle of Corralchen that signalled the army of the existence of the EZLN; there were already infiltrators inside the organization, while indigenous people getting drunk in the bars of the main cities of Chiapas were already talking of the war that was imminent, therefore the EZLN had to rush. (DelaGrange

[46] Interview of Fernando Yanez with Leonidas Oikonomakis, 13 January 2016.

and Rico 1999) So on January 1st, 1994[47] the EZLN made their first public appearance, occupying seven main cities of Chiapas, taking Mexico and whole world by surprise.

Primero de Enero

First San Cristobal fell at 1 a.m., Las Margaritas followed two hours later, *"…Altamirano at 6 in the morning, Huixtan, Chanal, Oxhic during the passing of the troops that were advancing to Rancho Nuevo and at 4 in the evening they informed me from the radio that Ocosingo has fallen in our hands"* Marcos would later say to Le Bot (Le Bot and Marcos 1997). Ocosingo, according to the same account, was the last city to fall, because the army had concentrated all their strength there, a consequence, of course, of the battle of Corralchen. The then President of Mexico, Carlos Salinas De Gortari, also confirms that the government knew of the existence of the rebels after the incident at Corralchen, but also even before. Yet they did not know how extensive the rebel movement was, neither could they imagine it, judging from how surprising Salinas describes the moment he heard of the uprising, at around 3 a.m. on January the 1st. (Salinas de Gortari 2002)

Between January the 1st and the January the 12th, when the government was forced by massive civil society protests in Mexico City to declare a cease-fire, deadly battles took place in the mountains and jungles of Chiapas. The government launched an offensive and the EZLN fighters were forced to retreat to the *selva*[48], where the governmental bombardments continued until at least the 16th of January: "*We took down three helicopters and three planes in the mountains*", Marcos would admit to Le Bot (1997).

[47] The day Mexico was entering "the First World" with the NAFTA put into effect.

[48] The initial plan according to Marcos was to march forward as far away as possible from the communities (…all the way to Mexico City if possible). The reason was two-fold: a) for the battles to take place away from the communities, and b) for the communities to prepare themselves for the resistance to the army attack that was expected to follow. (Le Bot and Marcos 1997)

¡Autonomia!

In February 1994, the first negotiations between the government and the EZLN began: the Dialogues of the Cathedral. They are called so because they took place at the Cathedral of San Cristobal de las Casas under the mediation of the Bishop of the Dioceses Samuel Ruiz. The EZLN presented 34 demands some of which were national (free and democratic elections, resignation of the President, liberation of political prisoners), some others had to do with the campesinos of Mexico and the indigenous populations in general (indigenous autonomy, reform of the Article 27, health and education, bilingual education), and others were limited to Chiapas (trials for local authorities, new elections, electrification of the region). However, while the Zapatista Demands had a national dimension and had to do with the overall democratization of the country, the government proposals that eventually came out of this process were only partially satisfactory and rather locally focused, limited to the region of Chiapas. The Zapatista communities eventually rejected the proposals (97.88% voted against them), and from this process is that the legendary Zapatista moto "para nosotros nada, para todos todo" came about: the EZLN demanded real democratization and for the whole country, not only for Chiapas[49]. Characteristic of the Zapatista stance towards the proposals is the following excerpt:

"Just like in the points mentioned before, the demand to put an end to hunger and malnutrition of our people is intended [by the government] to be limited to some regions of Chiapas. As if hunger and malnutrition have been a patrimony only of *Los Altos* of the Jungle, and as if the programs could be eaten, the government responds with promises of programs against infant malnutrition." (CCRI del E Z L N 1994b)

However, while the dialogues failed, what is important to note is that this is probably the first time that the demand for autonomy comes up on behalf of the Zapatistas, which in this first instance is described as "cultural, political and judicial. (CCRI del E Z L N 1994a)" This is particularly important if we consider that the word autonomy is not mentioned in

[49] For a detailed analysis of the government proposals and the reasons why they were rejected, consult the relevant announcement by the CCRI (CCRI del E Z L N 1994b).

the First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle even once, therefore we can assume - because there is not enough evidence to allow us to speak with be certainty- that between the 1st of January 1994 and the 1st of March 1994 when the relevant communique (CCRI del E Z L N 1994a) was published[50], something happened within the organization and the communities that brought the demand for autonomy to the forefront of their struggle. Since access to the processes that took place in the communities during this time, the assemblies and the decisions taken in them, is still very limited, we can assume that seeing the failure of the Revolutionary route, it is in that period that the Zapatistas decided to switch to a Plan B, a "non-plan[51]" as I call it, which had autonomy at its core. In addition, knowing that the internal decision making processes had already started to become more direct-democratic since 1993 already, we can also assume that this is how the decision to change strategy was taken as well.

In August the Zapatistas held the first National Democratic Convention, at their *Aguascalientes* (in Guadelupe Tepeyak), which was attended by 6.000 people. In the meantime, elections were held and Ernesto Zedillo was sworn in as President. In December of the same year, the EZLN declared autonomy for its 38 autonomous municipalities (Stahler-Sholk 2007). The government, however, would respond with repression: troops were sent into Chiapas and a period of civilian-targeted, low-intensity warfare began, during which at least 20.000 people were displaced and the *Aguascalientes* were destroyed, in an action of symbolic character. In April the peace talks resumed, five more *Aguascalientes* were built (that would later be called Caracoles) in an equally symbolic counter-action, and a National and International Consultation was on-going throughout the country; the result of which called on the EZLN to transform itself into a political force (with the participation of 1.3 million people from Mexico and 55.000 from abroad (Bob 2005)). In October, the EZLN and the government began the famous talks of San Andrés in

[50] The aforementioned communique is the instrument through which publically mentions autonomy for the first time in a written form. However, during the dialogues of the Cathedral, the word autonomy was mentioned by EZLN representatives as a demand in at least two press conferences that took place in February 1994 as well.

[51] The reasons for calling it a "non-plan" are analyzed in the next chapter.

the village of San Andrés Larráinzar [52] ("*San Andrés Sakamch'en de los Pobres*", for the Zapatistas), which were signed on 16 February of the following year (1996) promising land-reform, autonomy for the indigenous communities, and the safe-guarding their cultural rights. In July/August of the same year, the Zapatistas organized the First Intercontinental Meeting for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism, which was attended by more than 3000 people from more than 42 countries, yet the Accords were never implemented or ratified by the Federal Government which led to the suspension of the talks. The COCOPA (Comisión por la Concordia y Pacificación), a multi-party commission intervened forming a legislative proposal that contained the main points of the Accords, the EZLN initially accepted the proposal however in December President Zedillo formally rejected the San Andrés Accords. In the meantime, an electoral reform was pacted between the PRI, the PAN, and the PRD ahead of the 1997 elections, and the government announced it would increase its social spending in Chiapas introducing social programs for the marginalized population. It has been argued that the 1996 electoral reform, the "Definite Reform" as it has been called, was the one that eventually facilitated the ousting of the PRI, since it made the electoral process somewhat fairer, overseen by an autonomous institute the IFE (Instituto Federal Electoral- Federal Electoral Insitute).

The year 1997 is for the EZLN what in social movement studies we call a "critical juncture", or a "fateful moment". 1,111 Zapatistas, allegedly one man and one woman from each community (Ross 2006; Ross 2002), marched to Mexico City, as they had declared 3 years previously, for the founding of the *Frente Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional*, the Zapatista National Liberation Front, the political (yet non-electoral/party) wing of the movement: "an organization that does not struggle to take power"[53]. A couple

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[52] Larráinzar, was the name of the landowner to whom the area used to belong.

[53] "The discussion around this point generally hinged on what kind of definition of power would be used in such a statement, and the general feeling in the working groups was that the principle of "not struggling to take power" implied the taking of State or institutional power, rather than a prohibition on the exercise of that power which lies in the people and society as a whole."(September 14, 1997 CNI Assembly Second Day of the FZLN Congress)

of months later, on 22 December 1997, one of the greatest atrocities of the war would take place in the community *Las Abejas* (The Bees) of Acteal, where the PRI-affiliated paramilitary group *Libertad y Justicia* (Liberty and Justice) massacred 45 people, mostly women and children. This was the beginning of a year of intense repression on behalf of Zedillo's government, which –after expelling 150 human rights observers from Chiapas- began attacking Zapatista communities, leading to at least 8 deaths in the community of San Juan de la Libertad, and the arrest of many indigenous Zapatistas.

2001, the Year of the Fox

In the year 2000, the Zapatistas announced that their members would vote in the national elections of the 2nd of July only if they wished so. Those elections saw the removal of PRI from the governmental seat after 71 years. Vicente Fox (of PAN) –who had promised to solve the Zapatista conflict in 15 minutes- was the winner, and following the EZLN's demands for a continuation of the peace talks, his government dismantled 7 of the 250 military encampments in Chiapas, released most of the Zapatista political prisoners and declared his willingness to implement the San Andrés Accords. The Zapatistas themselves responded with the impressive "March to Mexico City" (February-March 2001- another "fateful moment" for the EZLN), to demand that the government comply with the Accords and, on 11 March 2001, 250.000 Mexicans welcomed the Zapatistas at the historic Zócalo (square) of Mexico City. Unfortunately, only a mutilated version of the Accords passed through both houses, one that banned discrimination against the indigenous on the one hand, without permitting autonomy on the other (Bob 2005). The main difference had to do with the autonomous self-management of resources on Zapatista lands by the Zapatistas themselves, which was not approved by the government. As Harvey (2006) emphasizes, it is significant that while in the San Andrés Accords and the COCOPA proposal it was agreed that the indigenous peoples would have "collective access to the use and enjoyment of natural resources in their lands and Territories," in the reformed article that eventually passed what was mentioned was that indigenous communities have the right to "have access, while respecting the forms and modalities of property and land ownership

established in this Constitution and the legislation on this matter, as well as the rights acquired by third parties or community members, to the preferential use and enjoyment of the natural resources in the places that the communities inhabit and occupy. (ibid. p.10)" The difference is substantial: collective ownership rights are not recognized (let's not forget the Reformed Article 27), while at the same time the availability of indigenous lands for foreign capitalist investments is safeguarded. We are talking therefore about the "multi-cultural" version of autonomy Stahler-Sholk was warning against (2007); one in which indigenous peoples have their cultural identity "respected and recognized" but their collective rights to resources not. Those remain open for exploitation and penetration by the transnational capital.

The *Good Government Juntas* and the Other Campaign

The Zapatistas fell into silence from that moment onwards, which they broke only in 2003 with a 20.000 people March to San Cristobal, and the announcement of the creation of the Good Government Juntas in their autonomous municipalities, which is basically the announcement of self-implementation of the Accords the Government did not approve. And while the Zapatistas fell into silence again and were working on building their autonomous councils, the government continued with its low-intensity warfare in Chiapas.

The Zapatista silence would break only two years later when, ahead of the then-upcoming elections of 2006, the EZLN announced its Other Campaign, a non-electoral campaign that took the EZLN and its *Delegado Zero* (as Marcos renamed himself) all around the country, to organize meetings with several civil society organizations (another "fateful moment" for the EZLN). The elections were won by PAN and Felipe Calderón by a very marginal lead, amongst widespread accusations of fraud from the side of the candidate of the institutional left (PRD) Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO). It is very important to note here that the Zapatistas had opposed the candidateship of AMLO, an action which –considering the very marginal difference between the two candidates

(35.89% for PAN, 35.31% for PRI)- may have played a role in the final result according to some analysts.

Thereafter, and while Felipe Calderón launched his “War against Narco-trafficking” that cost the lives of more than 70.000 people throughout the country, the EZLN fell once again into silence, which it broke only in May 2011 with a March of more than 20.000 Zapatistas in San Cristobal de las Casas in solidarity with Javier Sicilia’s 'March for Peace with Justice and Dignity'. Since 2006, and as a result of the heavy repression organizations belonging to the Other Campaign were facing (San Salvador Atenco, APO-*Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca*), the EZLN did not publically announce any new initiatives but passed once again into silence. Looking for an explanation for this, and while talking with several EZLN members during my fieldwork (summer 2012), I was told on more than one occasions that the Zapatistas perceived the “War against Narcotrafficking” as a pretext on behalf of the government to “*put off the small volcanoes of the Mexican society*” and they did not intend to give the government any excuse to enter the Zapatista territories. “*Most of the repression in the past six years was directed towards organizations belonging to the Other Campaign, and most of the political prisoners in Mexico right now are related to the Zapatistas”*, I was told, with reference to several human rights abuse cases that took place during the administration of Felipe Calderón (Oikonomakis 2012b). The Zapatista response to that repression, but also to the election of Enrique Peña Nieto (the governor of the Estado de Mexico who gave the order for the heavy repression in Atenco) to the Presidential Seat earlier that year, was impressive though: a 50.000 strong silent March in a number of main cities of Chiapas, the same ones they had violently occupied in 1994 (San Cristóbal de las Casas, Ocosingo, Palenque, Las Margaritas, Comitan, and Altamirano), on 21 December 2012 (Oikonomakis 2012a).

This chapter presented the historical evolution of the Zapatista movement from the creation of the FLN and until the ‘silent march’ of December 2013. In the following chapter, I will to analyze when, through what mechanisms, under what circumstances, and for what reasons the political strategies of the EZLN were formed, trying to find some answers to

why the FLN and EZLN selected the armed struggle in the beginning, and when they shifted to autonomy and “no-state power” later on, why the did so.

CHAPTER V

The EZLN and its "non-state power road"

"In reality, the only thing we proposed

was to change the world; the rest we have improvised."

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos

CHAPTER V

THE EZLN AND ITS "NON-STATE POWER" ROAD

The Cuban Resonance

Between 1960 and 1980, under the repressive regime of the PRI that showed its most brutal expression in 1968 on the *Plaza de las Tres Culturas* at Tlatelolco, and the powerful resonance of the Cuban revolution (Castellanos 2007; Pensado 2013), dozens of revolutionary groups were formed in Mexico with a common dream: that of social revolution (Cedillo 2012; Castellanos 2007). Herrera Calderon and Cedillo, write:

"*Activists in the 1960s and 1970s were politically formed in the universities and schools, and radicalized by state repression and the influence of national liberation movements in China, Vietnam, Algeria, and above all Cuba*." (Herrera Calderón and Cedillo 2012, 6)

Those groups were, however, either destroyed by the state forces or dissolved over time, and for almost fifteen years the armed struggle option seemed to have been abandoned by the Mexican left. In the relevant bibliography it is almost an axiom that in democratic regimes even the most revolutionary of the left tends to turn towards elections, while repressive authoritarian regimes leave "no other way out" other than the armed struggle option (Yashar 2005a; Silva 2009; Goodwin 2001a; Wickham-Crowley 1993). This "axiom" is challenged by the Zapatista uprising of January 1, 1994. In the era of the "End of History" (Fukuyama 1992) and while other Mexican and global revolutionary movements had already given up the armed struggle option, the EZLN rose up in arms to take seven cities in Chiapas (San Cristóbal de las Casas, Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, Altamirano, Chanal, Oxchuk, Huixtan) and declare war on the Mexican state, a Mexican

state that was just entering the “First World” through the NAFTA agreement that was just being put into effect.

Why did the Zapatistas choose the *via armada* when other revolutionary movements had long abandoned it and it was no longer perceived as a relevant option for the Mexican and international left? And why did they also later abandon the armed struggle to opt for the “non-state power” road to social change?

In this chapter, based on secondary sources of information (scholarly publications, organizational documents), ethnographic fieldwork, and formal and informal discussions with people that are, or have been, directly associated in one way or another with Zapatismo (either as BAEZLN, as ex-FLN or EZLN members, or as adherents of the *Otra/Sexta*) conducted between 2012-2015, as well as thanks to previously unknown internal documents of the FLN, I will examine the “road” to social change the FLN/EZLN have chosen to walk. Through my research, I will try to identify through what mechanisms the FLN/EZLN chose what “road” to social change to follow, and when they shifted from one “road” to “another”, why they did so.

I will do so, adopting an analytic narrative (Bates et al. 1998) and a process-tracing approach that will trace back the most important –according to my personal understanding and interpretation- “fateful moments” in the history of the movement by way of narrative; that is the moments when decisions for important actions were taken, or not. In this manner I believe I can provide answers to the research questions of this thesis: how movements choose their political strategy, and when they shift from one to another, why they do so.

The critical junctures

To answer the aforementioned research questions, we have to embark on a journey that traces back the Zapatista movement from the very beginnings of what today is the EZLN, to its very present condition. In my journey to the FLN/EZLN's past, I depend on historical research based on relevant scholarly publications, internal organizational documents, as well as on formal and informal discussions with ex-FLN members and present-day Zapatistas with several years' experience in the movement. In my return to its present, I rely on extensive ethnographic fieldwork I have conducted between 2012 and 2015. Regarding the "critical junctures" during which the EZLN decided to adopt a specific road to social change or shift (or not shift) to another, my research will focus on the following:

17 November 1969 -12 January 1994: a period during in which the FLN/EZLN were dedicated to one or another form of the armed struggle for the seizure of state power (the "Insurgent route" of the "state-power road"). What made them choose the "insurgent route" of the "state power road" back then? And how did they manage to maintain their belief in the armed struggle for 25 years, while other revolutionary movements in Mexico and elsewhere had abandoned it?

12 January 1994: When the EZLN decided to retreat from the road of armed struggle, to adopt what Clifford Bob calls "armed nonviolence" (Bob 2005) and Holloway (1998) "community in arms" and enter a long period of negotiations with successive governments. Why did they not retreat back into the Jungle, to become yet another rebel movement in the jungles and mountains of Latin America, like many others?

August 2013: the Zapatistas announced the autonomy of their municipalities. They broke all negotiations with the state, and never again entered in any kind of relation with it. Why do they do so?

But let us start this analysis from the beginning…

Las Fuerzas and their via armada.

According to the interview given by Marcos to Le Bot in 1997, what constitutes Zapatismo today, is comprised of three parts:

-a politico-military group [The FLN]

-a group of politicised and experienced indigenous people.

- the indigenous movement of the Jungle.

The FLN, as we saw in the previous chapter, had selected the revolutionary strategy of *foco* (according to Marcos) or *núcleo* (according to Fernando Yáñez Muñoz) *guerillero* – which they later switched to that of the Prolonged Popular/People's War (Guerra Popular Prolongada) as we will see later on in this chapter- in order to bring about the kind of social change they dreamt of. Regardless of the specifics of the variations of the revolutionary struggle they adopted, their understanding was that the only road open for social change was the seizure of state power through armed struggle, the "insurgent route" of the "state-power road". But how did they come to the conclusion that armed struggle was the route they had to walk? And how did they manage to maintain this belief for 25 years? To answer this question we have to trace back the historical roots of the FLN from their creation in 1969, and through a process tracing approach explore the "fateful moments" of this movement.

Un, dos, tres…muchos Vietnam!

"Every time time we complete our quiet, silent –yet of maximum importance- work, we will be saying 'Present!' to the Commander in Chief of the Americas, and we will be participating in his slogan of "creating one, two, three, …many Vietnams." (Compañero Pedro 1969)

The FLN, were first and foremost a child of their era: of the revolutionary wind that was blowing through large parts of Latin America during the 60s and the 70s inspired to a large part by the success of the Cuban Revolution (Gonzalez 1984; Selbin 2009; Herrera Calderón and Cedillo 2012; Wickham-Crowley 1993). Therefore, it is no surprise that their initial choice was to follow the revolutionary strategy of Castro and Guevara, that of *núcleo* - or *foco- guerillero*. But this answers only half the question: why they selected this *type* of armed struggle. It does not tell us why they selected armed struggle in general. Through what mechanisms did they reach the conclusion that the armed struggle would be the way to go? That it would be a strategy that could be correct and victorious? According to Adela Cedillo, a historian who has thoroughly investigated the history of the FLN and conducted interviews with some of their former members, the reason was simple: all the political opportunities were closed, and there was no legal way to political power.

"*The conclusion that I reached revolved around the impossibility for these individuals and their organizations to gain power by legal means, such as to construct political participation options able to solve the national problems. The intolerance before the deprivation of power, coupled with state terror, which had led to the development of a self-defensive instinct, had been constant arguments in all the interviews I conducted with urban ex-guerilleros. Thus, there was no doubt that the reasons were more political than economic, because although they all mentioned the poverty in which much of the population lived, the militants usually did not belong to the disadvantaged sector.*" (Cedillo 2010, 40)

Laura Castellanos also notes that after the Tlatelolco massacre more than thirty armed revolutionary movements sprang up in Mexico, mainly comprised of youngsters and students (Castellanos 2007). Neil Harvey also argues that while the Cuban Revolution served as a point of reference especially regarding the FLN's political strategies, it was the post-Tlatelolco repression that led them to opt for the via armada (Harvey 2015, 19). I disagree. From the evidence we have it is clear that the FLN had already decided in favour of the revolutionary struggle already before October, 2 1968. Gunderson, for example, emphasizes the fact that the FLN militants had actually been radicalized politically **before**

the massacre of Tlatelolco, and not as a reaction to it (2013, 387). Reading the internal magazine of the FLN, Nepantla, it seems that this argument is confirmed by the life-trajectories of some of the FLN initial members. Take that of *Gonzalo* for example, as it was narrated in 1980 by Mario Marcos (Mario Marcos 1980):

"*In the mid-60s, together with other comrades, he put himself forward to fight against imperialism in any part of the world. With other comrades, in the same period, he carried out intense propaganda in favour of the Cuban revolution. Later he entered the Ejército Insurgente Mexicano (EIM) that was led by Mario Menendez. It was a very important period for his life and for our organization, the experiences that the comrades acquired in this period are of undisputed value…He was ready to learn from the mistakes, of which there had been many, but the armed struggle as the only way for liberation was in no way weakened by them; October '68 came to confirm it, once more*." (author's translation from Spanish)

The life trajectory of other FLN militants is also similar, at least in how they are depicted in the *recordatarios* of *Nepantla* and the internal communiqués of the FLN. Apart from *Gonzalo*, we also know that *Salvador* (Alfredo Zárate Mota) had tried to participate in armed revolutionary groups that never took off, long before the Tlatelolco massacre, and was also a member of the EIM, before he joined the F.L.N (Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional 1976a). *Manolo* (Mario Sanchez Acosta) had also been a member of the EIM (La Dirección de las FLN 1976), while *Aurora* (Julieta Glockner Rossainz) had travelled to Cuba inspired by the Revolution a few years after its triumph, even met Che Guevara personally (El Proceso 1995b), and had also tried to make contact with Guatemalan guerrillas in order to participate "in the struggle of the Guatemalan People against the dictatorship." (Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional 1976b) Such stories were typical in the life trajectories of other Latin American revolutionaries of the 1960s and 1970s as well, who were looking at Cuba not only as inspiration, but also as a place where they could possibly receive ideological and military training, as Wickham-Crowley also notes:

"…an enormous number of Latin Americans made the trip to Cuba, which quickly came to resemble a revolutionary Mecca where potential guerillas would be spiritually prepared - and often militarily trained- for revolutionary struggle." (Wickham-Crowley 1993, 31)

It is closer to the truth, however, that even if Tlatelolco was not the determinant point that radicalized the FLN, since they had already chosen the *via armada* before that, it certainly helped to confirm their already chosen strategy and also to attract new, younger, cadres that were radicalized because of the massacre. Subcomandante Marcos (although he joined the FLN much later) also admits that the *Fuerzas* used to believe that the peaceful struggle road was exhausted, and the only way forward was the seizure of state power through armed struggle, with the necessary installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the establishment of a government toward socialism (Le Bot and Marcos 1997).

In a personal communication I had with the *Casa de Todas y Todos*, established by some of the former FLN including Fernando Yáñez Muñoz, I received the same explanation: "the conditions were determined by the enemy (the state)." The same idea is reflected in the very first internal document issued by the FLN to its militants (FLN 1969) written by *Compañero Pedro*, which declares that "the only way imposed to us by the enemy, *the via armada*." It continues by arguing "…this war is the continuation of revolutionary politics in the way imposed on us by the conditions of the enemy himself." (ibid.) In an interview the author conducted with Fernando Yáñez Muñoz in January 2016, he said in relation to this that in Mexico, in the second half of the 21st century armed struggle was the only way since autonomy and electoral participation were impossible to realize.

Therefore, with all the political opportunities perceived as closed, it is no surprise that the militants of the FLN chose the road of the armed struggle. However, this decision was not a reactive, immediate one; it was a product of a long period of political preparation on behalf of the organization. It seems that historical experience of other movements, at home and abroad, also played a very significant role. The members of the FLN were Marxist-Leninist in terms of their political ideology and thinking, and they were heavily

influenced by the Cuban Revolution, as is revealed by internal organizational documents as well as by interviews of Marcos and Fernando Yáñez Muñoz. They were also heavily influenced by the heritage of Emiliano Zapata, the Party of the Poor (Partido de los Pobres) of Lucio Cabañas, the Chilean MIR, and of course the Nicaraguan Sandinistas. Fernando Yáñez confirms: "The FLN base their armed strategy on Mexican history, on its struggles ever since the Conquest in the mountains (the national revolutionary experience).[54]"

Regarding the manner in which they managed to maintain their belief in the revolutionary struggle for so many years and how and why they transformed themselves into the EZLN, Adela Cedillo (2010, 17) identifies a number of reasons:

a) The repression they experienced in 1974 which radicalized them to the point of no return
b) Their internal understanding of socialism as the only way forward, reason for which they rejected the political reform of 1977
c) The enthusiasm brought about by the successful Revolution of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1979
d) A successful recruitment policy which brought more and more resources to the organization
e) Their alliance with indigenous groups and organizations which helped them to make use of pre-existing networks in Chiapas
f) The perception of the recruited indigenous people themselves regarding the exhaustion of the legal road, and their choice of self-defence
g) The weakness of the national and federal State in Chiapas.

For all the above reasons, the members of the FLN –who were mostly *ladinos*[55] and *mestizos* and came from outside Chiapas- kept believing in the launch of the armed struggle from Chiapas, and kept trying to establish a rebel group in the *Selva,* even after at

[54] Interview with Fernando Yáñez Muñoz, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 13 January 2016.

[55] Non-indigenous.

least 5 unsuccessful attempts, which cost the lives of many of their comrades with several others deserting.

L@s Chiapanec@s

As we have already seen, through the historical evolution of the FLN in the previous chapter, the FLN through trial and error came to be absolutely conscious of the fact that if they were to install themselves in the jungle, they would need to have the indigenous peoples on their side. Consequently, through social work and years of efforts they managed to achieve this. But this raises another important question: why did the indigenous peoples decide to join the FLN in their socialist dream?

As Estrada Saavedra notes, the FLN did not enter a socio-political vacuum in Chiapas (2009, 351). While the official institutions of the state were largely absent from the region –or it could be said precisely for this reason- its population had created strong networks of mutual solidarity and cooperation. These networks manifested themselves in several communal activities, such as the construction of roads, clinics, schools, trade unions and cooperatives, all of which which permitted the locals to live their lives almost autonomously from the Mexican state. Chiapas also boasted an array of social, religious, and political actors. The Diocese of San Cristóbal (DSC), under the guidance of Bishop Samuel Ruiz, had been deeply involved since the sixties in the promotion of human rights and social justice, as well as the preservation of the cultural diversity of the Jungle[56] (Cedillo, 2010). Furthermore, in the aftermath of the 1968 massacre of Tlatelolco, several Maoist groups appeared in Chiapas. The most prominent of these were the UP (*Union del Pueblo)* and the *Politica Popular -Linea Proletaria,* which appeared in Chiapas in 1974 and 1977 respectively. The UP was founded in 1972 and was comprised of students and graduates of the Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo. The *Politica Popular-Linea*

[56] This approach contrasted with the cultural homogenization promoted by the Evangelical Protestant missionaries also present in the region.

Proletaria[57] had a similar movement composition and revolutionary trajectory. According to Cedillo (2010) these Maoist groups, particularly in their earliest days in Chiapas, were assisted by the Liberation Theologists already active in the social struggle there. The Maoist groups were accused by the FLN of having become "*grupos reformistas y economicisistas"* because their focus had drifted from revolutionary struggle to campaigning for social and economic justice through democratic assemblies, cooperatives, and trade unions. However, as one of the Maoist ideologist youth that had embarked on the journey of politically educating the indigenous people of Chiapas admitted in an interview, the Maoists were not as "reformist" as the FLN accused them of being. The option of armed struggle also formed part of their long-term strategy, however it was not their priority:[58]

"I was a militant of a Maoist organization. And yes there many Maoists already in Chiapas […] the Maoists who were coming from the *Liga Comunista Spartaco* were not disregarding the via armada, the armed struggle; they were just putting it third in their priorities. I mean we were putting it at third place. So according to the *catechism* we had received the three weapons of the people are: 1) the party, the *dirigentes*, the vanguard…the most fucking great, you know, film-style; 2) the popular front; with that belief - that certainty- we had that the people and the people only are those who make history; and then 3) the people's army…[…] Because the Maoists have that [characteristic]…of serving the people, learning from the people…Later on Mao said that we also had to criticize the people, but since that had not reached us yet, we set off to learn from the people. So what the *compañeros* [of the FLN/EZLN] did in the 80s, we were doing it already."

Eventually due to a series of ideological quarrels over the oppressive nature of religion, the Maoists distanced themselves from the initiatives of the Diocese and were expelled from the region by the local communities under the omnipresent influence of the DSC.

[57] It was a subdivision of the *Coalición* de Brigadas Emiliano Zapata, founded in 1968.

[58] Personal interview with Gaspar Morquecho, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 19 August 2013 in San Cristobal de las Casas Mexico.

However, even though they were expelled their practices did leave a mark on the communities, as Gunderson emphasizes:

“While the communities had their own prior historical experiences with ejidal and community assemblies of various sorts, these had previously functioned as vehicles of legitimizing the de-facto power of caciques aligned with the ladino elite and the party-state. The Maoists in effect appropriated the traditional practice and promoted a deepening of their democratic aspects by transforming the assemblies into spaces of genuine collective reflection and deliberation. They also promoted the opening up of the assemblies to women and young (unmarried) men. This produced in the communities a robust if uneven culture of direct and participatory democracy that would subsequently become a major strength and resource of Zapatismo.” (Gunderson 2013, 350)

Contrary to the Maoists, the FLN sagely avoided provoking the ire of the Diocese in the early stages of its presence in the Jungle. It respected the religiosity of the indigenous people and avoided criticising the church. In return the Diocese, while not endorsing the FLN, tolerated its activism in the region. In addition, one of the very first steps taken by the FLN was to infiltrate the development agency of the Diocese (DESMI), gaining contacts as well as first-hand access to the communities. However, eventually even the FLN/EZLN also clashed with the Diocese as a result of Marcos’ revolutionary weddings, his professed atheism and the distribution of contraceptive pills among the communities. These tensions arose much later, when the FLN/EZLN was deeply rooted to a sufficient degree in the region as to no longer fear a breach with the church (Henck 2007). Bishop Samuel Ruiz has famously observed: “these people [the FLN/EZLN] have arrived to mount a saddled horse", referring to the extensive work in the area of human rights that the Diocese had carried out in the communities before the FLN/EZLN’s arrival (ibid. 117-8). What he meant by this was that the Liberation Theologists, as well as the Maoist activists that the DSC had at the very least accepted, had problematized historical questions of shuman rights and social justice in the region, thus preparing the ground for the FLN/EZLN’s armed struggle.

Therefore, this development was a product of historical experience and movement memory of the indigenous people, as well as of direct experience and active training on behalf of the FLN. Let us not forget that one of the first communities the FLN tried to approach was that of the *ejido* of Lázaro Cardenas, an ejido which was already politicized and had tried the peaceful road in the past, only to be heavily repressed by the government. This experience had radicalized them to the point of accepting the FLN's armed struggle proposal as a means of last resort, which it must be noted, was a novelty for the indigenous of Chiapas at that time (Cedillo 2010) since the Maoist groups that preceded the FLN had not managed to stay in Chiapas long enough to introduce the armed struggle strategy in the first place.

Several indigenous members of the EZLN have repeatedly affirmed this perception they had regarding the peaceful legal alternative in several interviews they have given over the years. Ex-*Mayor*[59] Ana-Maria (*Yolanda*, one of the first indigenous recruits of the FLN) famously narrated that her family had always participated in peaceful struggles, but never gained anything as a result, which made her (and them) conscious that this was not the way to go (Mayor Ana Maria and Comandanta Ramona 1994). In Gloria Muñoz's "Fire and the Word", several other higher and lower ranking members of the EZLN give the same description:

"*The compa told us in class that someday we would have to use arms to end the system. We had already tried peaceful ways but nobody paid attention to us. Then we saw that there was no other option but to enter the armed struggle, so we organized to get stronger and stronger*", Comandante Abraham argued (Muñoz Ramírez 2008).

During the author's fieldwork in Chiapas, when an indigenous Tsotsil woman who had long been a member of the EZLN (ever since the times that it was secretly called "the

[59] She had left the EZLN by the time of my fieldwork in Chiapas but kept being affiliated with the indigenous communities.

organization") was asked why they had chosen the armed struggle, she gave the following answer:

"*We wanted to change the world in the only way it has ever changed: with the use of force. Like Zapata and like Villa*."

Political formation of FLN/EZLN cadres and propaganda instruments

The revolutionaries of the cities, and the indigenous people of the Jungle decided to join powers in armed struggle for different reasons; the latter due to personal and historical experience and ideology; the former due to personal and historical experience. In addition to this a long process of political education of the indigenous members also took place, as well as of their own non-indigenous members, on behalf of the FLN.

In order to train their cadres politically the FLN (and later on the EZLN) used various methods. They considered their struggle as part of the libertarian process of the whole of Latin America recognising, however, that each revolution was autonomous and dependent on the specificities of each country. They chose the strategy of the *núcleo* or *foco guerillero*: the installation of a rebel group in a specific part (geographically and socially suitable) of the country, which would become the focus, or the spearhead, of the revolutionary struggle. They did not consider theirs as a "militarist method," but rather as a "dialectical one" based on scientific theories and analysis that viewed the countryside as the most convenient terrain for a war of liberation. In their own words:

"*Let's keep in mind that our method of struggle does not conform to any romantic messianism, but rather is a product of a scientific analysis of reality, a reality in which there are no legal paths, democratic and peaceful, in order to definitely liberate ourselves from exploitation and submission. On the other hand, we should not forget either the*

transformations that the revolutionary work has done to us, giving us a clear (militant) perspective of the correct political exit.[60]" (Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional 1977)

One would imagine that the FLN based their political strategy and revolutionary method on their thorough study of other similar experiences elsewhere, and this is in fact the case. However, the FLN did not stop there. They even conducted their own historical research, including fieldwork and interviews (!), in an effort to identify the most suitable way to carry out the struggle. In an initiative that is probably associated with the academic background of some of their members, the FLN set out to study the strategies and the fate of former and contemporary (to them) revolutionary movements in Mexico and the world. Thus, they studied the Mexican revolutions of 1810 and 1910, the Cuban Revolution, the Sandinista Revolution, the War in Vietnam, but also the Mexican rebel groups of the 60s and 70s, including the *Grupo Popular Guerillero* (GPG) of Chihuahua, and the *Partido de los Pobres* (PdlP) of Guerrero. Furthermore, it seems that in 1981 Mario Marcos[61] –who was in charge of the Northern network around Chihuahua- even conducted fieldwork in his region, including interviews with family members and old sympathizers of the GPG, in order to find out their mindset and to pinpoint their political and military errors. He went on to publish a related article in the internal magazine of the FLN, *Nepantla*, which was later published as a book by *Rebeldía* (Mario Marcos 1981).

The case of the GPG is particularly interesting due to the similarities it has with the Zapatista 1 January 1994 offensive. The GPG, headed by Professor Arturo Gámiz García, on 23 September 1965 attacked the military barracks of the city of Madera. It had been preparing for this attack for over a year, however the mission was not a successful one:

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[60] Author's translation from Spanish.

[61] The man from whom Subcomandante Marcos took his nom de guerre, and who –according to Marcos' testimonies- used to teach him the history of Mexico during their long journeys together in their first years in the FLN. His real name was Adelaido Villafranco (Henck 2007).

eight out of thirteen rebels lost their lives. What is particularly interesting about the case is that it constitutes the first attempt by the Mexican revolutionary left to arm itself and attack the Mexican state in a direct manner. For years following the failed attack, however, the Mexican left had been criticizing the GPG for madness, bad preparation, and even regionalism that “wouldn’t lead anywhere.” Mario Marcos, however, conducted his research (which was later published into a book) and the conclusion he reached is that the attack to the barracks of Madera was **not intended to take the barracks** (Mario Marcos’ emphasis); on the contrary it was supposed to be a short engagement and the military plan was for the rebels to retreat immediately in order not to be exterminated. The political target was rather propagandistic, and was intended to be the beginning of the revolution in Mexico as it was expected that the Mexican people would take up arms against the government. However, the rebels did not manage to retreat on time and they were wiped out. Mario Marcos explains why he took up the task:

“*For those who take the revolutionary road seriously, it is essential to study the experiences of the past seriously, especially the guerrilla experience of Chihuahua, without of course leaving aside those of the state of Guerrero and the history of the urban revolutionary movement of the previous decade…The ultimate war of liberation has already began. It was initiated by Gámiz, was continued by Oscar, Genaro, Lucio and hundreds of anonymous combatants; it is only waiting to be resumed. It is not necessary to repeat the negative [results] that history has already managed to overcome. We have to recuperate this history, in order to avoid costly mistakes*.” (Mario Marcos 1981, 36 - Author's translation)

It seems that the EZLN seriously took Mario Marcos’ study into account and the man who Mario Marcos would teach history in their long journeys and would later revive his *nom de guerre*[62], did not repeat the same mistakes: the EZLN retreated on time from San Cristobal de las Casas and the other Chiapas cities it took on 1 January 1994. Other

[62] “I took the name of a companero who taught me the history of Mexico that he knew like an encyclopedia, especially the military history. ..Finally they killed him and I took his name,” would narrate Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos to Le Bot (Le Bot and Marcos 1997) years later.

conclusions the FLN reached through this process were, in short, that although the *campesinos* have proved to be the most revolutionary subjects throughout Mexican history, even the most advanced movements of the *foco* type (Partido de los Pobres-PdlP) were defeated due to their regional isolation. In addition, the *campesinos* constituted a very small share of the population, and for that reason the government would not hesitate to wipe them out. Therefore, what was required was a national struggle, with the participation of *campesinos*, workers, and progressive parts of the bourgeoisie. This research carried out by the FLN, led them to abandon their emphasis on the strategy of the *núcleo* or *foco guerillero*, and to adopt the strategy of the Prolonged People's/Popular War (Guerra Popular Prolongada[63]) instead (Cedillo 2010).

Internal Communiqués and clandestine and semi-clandestine magazines

For the FLN, the political and ideological formation of their members was of the utmost importance. They did not, however, only select cadres who were already adequately trained, since they considered that their role was to ensure that their members would become ideologically trained, even if they were not so in the first place:

"…*a comrade with an honest attitude towards life, who is discreet and willing, proving that through initially small and subsequently more important tasks, even if theoretically he/she has not read the elementary [materials], can become an excellent militant, provided that the comrade who is responsible for his/her capturing, provides them with the books and*

[63] *Foquismo*, advocates that rebel groups that use a specific countryside geographical location of the country as a base of operations, could create the conditions for the revolution, attack the state, and eventually but rather quickly defeat it and take state power. Prolonged People's War (or Prolonged Popular War, as is the Nicaraguan term), which is a Maoist concept, is the idea of creating a parallel state in a specific geographical location of the country, maintaining the class-wide support of the people, while trying to expand their reach country-wide. (Wickham-Crowley 1993)

the means for his ideological preparation during the practice itself." [64](Compañero Pedro 1969)

Amongst those means were: the communiqués of the FLN, the study of the history of the Global Revolutionary Movement, Marxist-Leninist texts, and of course the active communication of their ideas during clandestine workshops that were taking place in the jungle, the communities and the military camps, and the safehouses of the organization in the cities.

Publications

The FLN, for reasons of the ideological formation of their own cadres, as well as for propaganda towards non-members, made use of several publications, some of them open, others semi-open, and others still completely clandestine. They were not alone in this, as it was something that other guerrillas had also done in the past. One such case is the *Grupo Popular Guerillero* of Chihuahua, which also had its own clandestine internal publication called *Ediciones Linea Revolucionaria* (Mario Marcos 1981, 13). The FLN's main internal magazine was *Nepantla*, a clear reference to the their fallen comrades of who had been assassinated in the town of the same name on 14 February 1974. At the same time they were also publishing other magazines with a less clandestine character, such as *Conciencia Proletaria*. For Gunderson the FLN also had two further internal publications; *Nupi* (for the EZLN insurgents) and *Estrella Roja* (red star) for the *milicianos* (Gunderson 2013, 482). Adela Cedillo, however, argues that Nupi was just a short name for *Nepantla* and stands for *NUestra Publicación Interna* (Our Internal Publication) (Cedillo 2010, 114).

[64] Author's translation from Spanish.

Nepantla

The full name of the magazine was *Nepantla: agitation instrument and internal publication of the FLN (Nepantla: Órgano de agitación y Publicación Interna de las FLN).* The very first issue was published on 14 February 1979, patently to commemorate the fallen FLN members of the Nepantla safehouse. It was not published very periodically, however, there was a new issue every one to three months. According to an article published on the website of the *Casa de Todas y Todos* years later (Grupo Editorial de la Casa de Todas y Todos 2014) one of the main protagonists behind the publication of *Nepantla* was Mario Marcos who "*enriched the publications not only with his ideas, but also with his work as designer and printer, with photocopies, wax stencils, manual mimeograph, electronic stencils and even serigraphy for the covers.*" According to the editorial of the first *Nepantla* magazine, the organizational necessities that *Nepantla* came to fulfil are the following,:

"*First: to complement the political training that our cadres receive from their handlers.*

Second: to provide comrades of all levels with a forum where they can express their own ideas on the topics that interest them.

Third: to establish a more open, critical, and engaged communication between the Direction and the militants.

Fourth: to prepare ourselves in order to elaborate quantitavely and qualitatively distinctive publications, essential to propagate to the working class people our programmes and approaches that will attract them to the struggle. " (La Dirección de FLN 1979- author's translation from Spanish)

In addition to all of this *Nepantla* came to fulfil one more role: the necessity to use some articles of the magazine outside the organization for propaganda purposes. However, the FLN recognized that the semi-open character of *Nepantla* did not permit them to express their key fundamental with full clarity: the seizure of power by the working class people through the socialist revolution (FLN 1980b). They also recognized

that they would need additional publications for working class people and farmers, indigenous communities, squatter colonies etc.

Nepantla had several columns, some of which were permanent: *Editorial*, *Situación Nacional* (National Situation), *Nuestra Historia* (Our History), *Nuestros Héroes (*Our Heroes), *En el Mundo* (In the World), *Las Armas de la critica* (The weapons of critique), *Cultura* (Culture), *La critica de las armas* (The critique of weapons), *Los compañeros dicen* (The comrades say), *De pie America Latina* (On foot Latin America). Additionally, periodically there were also texts that dealt with the expertise of certain FLN members. It is worth going through the permanent sections of *Nepantla* one by one in order to understand how the FLN viewed the use of historical examples and characters, as well as how they were trying to achieve the political and ideological formation of their members.

Editorial: The editorial was always the first piece of text in Nepantla and mainly dealt with important organizational issues and developments, as well as presenting the articles that would follow. They also dealt with clarifying some actions of the organization and providing the ideological justification for them: why a publication was required, for example, or what is the importance of commemorating the fallen FLN cadres.

Nuestra Historia: This section, as its name suggests, was dedicated to narrating the history of the organization, in order to remind the older members as well as to inform the newest ones about it. Let us not forget that after 1974 the FLN had lost a big number of their initial members, either in Nepantla or in Ocosingo, and they had to recruit new cadres and reorganize. This section of Nepantla magazine recounted the past phases of the organization, including the participation of some of its members in the EIM (Ejército Insurgente Mexicano), the attack in Nepantla itself, the experience of the NGEZ in Ocosingo etc. Sometimes there was also a *recordatorio,* always dedicated to one of the FLN fallen cadres, written by somebody who knew them. Mario Marcos –who would later ironically enough receive his own *recordatorio* by his comrades- explains the purpose of this section:

"*There is another way to remember our comrades: in a historical sense. Not because they had aspired to the glory that would maybe make their name big one day, but rather*

because the revolutionary man is an historical man par excellance. First, because he studies history –above all that of his people- searching in it the keys to understand social reality; moreover because he collects the desire for change of the masses and organizes them in one strategy; and also because he occupies his position in the army of the exploited in order to make the revolution, which is to make history." (Grupo Editorial de la Casa de Todas y Todos 2014)

Therefore, we see that the FLN had a very distinctive understanding of their own struggle within the historical context, as well as of the importance of past historical experience in it. At the same time, the fallen comrades served as exemplary comrades for the future FLN generations and their sacrifice was seen as enhancing the responsibility of the remaining ones towards the organization and the collective cause.

Situación Nacional: This section dealt with more contemporary issues like elections and electoral reforms, salaries, ideological purpose of education etc. It basically reflected the political *line* of the organization.

Marxismo: This was always a section dedicated to Marxist or Leninist texts, that were seen as enhancing the theoretical formation of the FLN, which the organization valued significantly.

Nuestros Héroes: This was a very important section of *Nepantla*. It dealt with the recuperation of historical examples, that –according to the FLN- had been used by the establishment in a way that legitimized its own existence. It is interesting to see how the FLN themselves viewed the importance of historical examples in their struggle:

"*History, as we have also said in other occasions, has been (and [still] is) robbed from the workers by the bourgeois ideology. This way all the events in which the protagonists have been our people have been concealed, deformed, or annihilated in official patriotic discourses, removing from them all of their political, liberating context. For that reason, it is the task of the vanguard, the classist –proletarian- revaluation of the history of our country: to rescue the best traditions of the struggle of our people incorporating them into the struggle for socialism…In every just war, the patriots, the revolutionaries, win and lose*

battles; and the people pay with the blood of their sons for their victories. So it happened in Mexico: men were lost, battles were lost, but the triumph was on the side of the patriots, who were the people. Just as happened recently in Vietnam, in Angola, in Cuba, in Nicaragua; just as is happening now in El Salvador, in Guatemala…just like what will happen in Mexico…for that reason, the rescue we are doing to our past, increases the firepower of our principal weapon: ideology, which converted into revolutionary acts can help us face with more consciousness our principal enemy, the apparently all-powerful yanqui imperialism, until we beat it." (FLN 1980f)

Thus, the Our Heroes section of *Nepantla* has paraded national and international historical figures like the anarchists of May 1 in Chicago (FLN 1980f), Jose Maria Morelos (FLN 1980e), Miguel Hidalgo (FLN 1979b), and others. I can be seen, therefore, that long before the EZLN, the FLN had already realized the importance of recuperating ownership of certain historical figures in order to claim continuity and gain for themselves the legitimizing power that this "ownership" brings with it (Jansen 2007).

En el Mundo and *De Pie America Latina*: In this section, the FLN analyzed other international struggles of revolutionary anti-colonial character, contemporary or historical, that they felt particularly close to: Angola (FLN 1979a), Palestine (FLN 1980c), Fidel Castro (Javier(FLN) 1979) and Sandino(Maria(FLN) 1979), Amilcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau, or the Sandinista revolution are just some of the examples. The political role of this section was extremely important: not only did it enhance the internationalism of the FLN cadres and provide them with successful and inspirational revolutionary examples from elsewhere, but it also also assisted them psychologically, assuring them that they were not alone in their struggle for the revolution. In an article that was analysing the 6th Cuba meeting of the Non-Aligned States, *Sofia*, wrote respectively on 27 December 1979 (Sofia (FLN) 1979):

"*While we fulfil the tasks that our head of section entrusts to us, the militants of the FLN must have, as an additional stimulus; that at the same time that we get bullets, paper, nylon, ink, etc., or [at the same time that] we do political propaganda with workers, farmers and students, in other parts of the globe there is a Palestinian worker, a Salvadoran*

youth, an Iranian student, a Namibian rebel, a Zimbabwean kid, a Guatemalan indigenous person…doing the same: struggling against enemy number one of humankind, imperialism. There are millions of us. Victory will be ours."

It should also be noted that the FLN were not only aspiring to follow the examples of the successful revolutionary movements they admired, but they were also cautious of the perceived failures of others. For example, in an editorial article of Nepantla from 1980 (FLN 1980b) they write about the *coup d'état* in Chile, which they considered as a "*failure of the via Allendista*":

"*The military coup in Chile had shown once more the necessity for revolution in order to form and consolidate the apparatuses of popular power. The political disturbance that came with the failure of the Allende path, was translated into the radicalization of many militants, who intensified their efforts to fulfil the plans of the organization*".

Las Armas de la Critica: This section was dedicated to Marxist-Leninist texts that the FLN considered crucial for the ideological and political formation of their cadres.

La Critica de las Armas: This section had to do with the military formation of the FLN. It included articles about training around the knowledge and practice in the use of weapons (Quique(FLN) 1980), guerrilla tactics such as the ambush (Nepantla, year II/issue9), the defensive use of the machine gun etc. This section was more of practical importance for the FLN members.

Cultura: The section dedicated to culture normally hosted short or longer poems and texts dedicated to international heroes of the revolution, like Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara.

Militancia practica: This section was dedicated to more practical skills that the militants needed to acquire for the more efficient completion of their duties. Examples that have been hosted in this section are: cryptography (Nepantla, year I/issue 1), and invisible ink (Nepantla, year I/issue 8).

Los compañeros dicen: This section was dedicated to the internal dialogue between the FLN cadres. It should not be forgetten that there were points in time in which the FLN had

dozens of members who lived in different regions and cities, and they did not always know each other. In this section FLN members would write articles regarding their experience in the movement (a visit to a safehouse, an excursion in the jungle) or they would comment on earlier articles from previous issues and the editors of *Nepantla* would respond to their comments. It is interesting to note that in this section, the man who would allegedly become Subcomandante Marcos later on, made his first appearance. Under the nickname *Zacarias*, and introduced as a newly-recruited member who "says a lot with few words", he wrote:

"*The modernization and sophistication of the repressive apparatus of the Mexican State from 1968 onwards, the daily breakings of workers and farmers, the mirage of bourgeois "legality" and the efficient but contradictory functioning of the ideological apparatus of the State; all of these have brought the workers and farmers movements and the diverse popular struggles to the conviction of the incapacity of the system to give a way out to their increasingly aggressive demands."* (Zacarias (FLN) 1980)

He also speaks of the certainty that *"those who opt for the trap of the "legal way" only end up finding one response: REPRESSION.*" (Zacarias' emphasis). Therefore what he proposed was the formation of a clandestine politico-military organization that would work on two tasks: knowing the enemy, and the education and political and military preparation of its cadres. He concludes his article arguing that this organization has to be prepared *"for the moment that the people will say ¡Basta!*" (Zacarias (FLN) 1980)

Conciencia Proletaria

Conciencia proletaria was another publication of the FLN, not clandestine this time, which –according to its editors- was more of a collection of "notebooks of Marxist-leninist practice, that were intended for advanced nuclei of workers, farmers, intellectuals, students and professionals with the aim of contributing to the integration of the exploited of our country and to the international revolutionary solidarity of our people." (Conciencia Proletaria 1979) This publication was more widely circulated and nowhere did it mention the FLN, their history or its revolutionary political strategy. Some articles (*Angola, el giron Africano*, *6a Cumbre de Havana, Hidalgo Libertador* etc.) had already appeared in earlier versions of *Nepantla*, exactly the same or in longer versions (*Conciencia proletaria* in general avoided reference to the FLN and where in the original articles there appeared any reference to them, in the version published in *Conciencia Proletaria* those references were emitted). For reasons unknown to this researcher, in the third issue of *Conciencia Proletaria* (Conciencia Proletaria 1980) there is also a correspondence address directed to a postal box in Nicaragua. It remains to find out whether the address was real or fake, for purposes of protecting the identity of the editors by misleading possible secret intelligence investigations.

Internal Communiqués

The role of the internal communiqués of the organization were extremely important for the development of the FLN. While their membership was growing, and since many of their members did not know and could not meet with each other very often due to geographical limitations and security reasons, the FLN had to come up with another strategy of communicating the political line of the Direction, and ensuring the ideological training of their cadres. What they came up with, from as early as the very foundation of the FLN (the first was published on 31 August 1969- just 25 days after their foundation), was the publication of their internal, confidential, clandestine communiqués.

The author managed to gain access to 27 communiqués and it is on them that the following analysis is based. The first was published on 31 August 1969. The last one that this study has access to was published 21 years later, on 22 March 1980. There were different types depending on whom they were destined to. There were communiqués prepared for all the members of the FLN, others that were only for the heads of the local networks, others that were only for the *professional* members, and others that were partly for the highest ranking members, and the rest for all the militants.

In terms of content, they varied significantly. Some referred to the security measures the members of the FLN had to take. Others, especially those for the highest ranking members, contained instructions that would "guide" the political formation of the newer members: daily activities of military and ideological preparation, suggestions on how to recruit members etc. There were also communiqués whose purpose was to analyse the national and international situation and give the FLN response towards it (Compañero Pedro 1971b; Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional 1977). The history of the FLN and the commemoration of their fallen comrades had a special place in the communiqués of the organization. The history of the movement was repeated regularly, in order to make sure that the newer recruits would be conscious of it, especially on the anniversaries of the foundation of the FLN (6 August), and on that of the discovery of Nepantla safehouse (14 February). Another purpose of this was to learn from past mistakes (Compañero Pedro 1970c). Normally, on the anniversary of the foundation of the FLN there was also a report on the achievements of the organization over the past year(s). Whenever some important event was happening, good or bad, the members of the FLN would also find out about from the organizations communiqués (discovery of a safehouse, desertion of a member, execution of the persons the FLN considered "traitors").

Workshops and active training

But what perhaps played the most important role in the political and ideological formation of the FLN cadres and the EZLN rebels, was the active training they received through numerous workshops that the FLN/EZLN organized. These workshops were organized a) in the cities, in the safehouses of the FLN, b) in Chiapas, in the military camps of the EZLN and, of course c) in the indigenous communities themselves.

As we have seen earlier, the FLN regularly organized workshops, training sessions, and explorative excursions in their safehouses and in their camps in the *Selva* ever since the beginning of their struggle. In several articles in *Nepantla* for example, compañeras describe their visits to the safe-houses or to the camps of the organization in the *Selva*. Those activities could last between a few days to many months. When the FLN decided to actively train their first indigenous members, they were also invited to spend some time in several of the FLN safehouses, inside and outside of Chiapas, where apart from Marxism-Leninism and history, they would also be taught Mathematics, Spanish, in some cases to read and write, as well as some technical skills that they regarded important for their struggle: shoemaking, tailoring, tanning, driving etc. Of course, the same kind of training in addition to the military training, was taking place in the military camps of the FLN and later on of the EZLN. After the initial phase of the political training of FLN cadres and EZLN rebels was complete, the former would then go back to their own cities, the later to their own communities, in order to recruit and politically train in turn other potential members. In a biography of Subcomandante Moisés (as he is known today) we find a wonderful excerpt that describes this process:

"*During eight months of living everyday with the comrades, Moisés confronts his past. Now he feels part of something, he understands that his participation is important and that each and every one of his acts carries great responsibility…he understands that there exist men like Marx, Lenin, Fidel, Zapata, or Che, who can be heroes for some and monstrous authorities for others, and there are little men regularly angelical and morally good for almost all; his command of Spanish is more fluent day by day, just like his tseltal and*

tojolabal, for that reason they want him in the communities, he speaks to them in their language, in their own spirit…his steps are not the same anymore." (Sellschopp 2004, 78)

We see, therefore, that the FLN and the EZLN placed huge importance on the political formation of their members, and they actively contributed to it through a) studying past historical cases and ideological texts themselves, b) communicating the results of their studies through internal communiqués, safehouse meetings, workshops, and clandestine and semi-clandestine magazines.

Becoming "otherly"

What also played a crucial road in the transformation of the FLN into the EZLN we know today, although it may have not projected itself directly at that point (but certainly did later), was the leadership change of 1993 and the "indigenization" it had already gone through. From that moment onwards, the EZLN transforms itself from a vanguard organization into an army of the communities, as Marcos describes it. Of course that transformation did not occur in a day, it was a process that lasted almost ten years and involved internal, rather natural, processes that were beyond the control and the imagination of the FLN. Very shortly after their installation in the mountains, the *ladinos* and the *mestizos* ceased to be the majority in the EZLN. Yet, although that was clearly reflected in the internal life of the organization, it was not reflected in its decision making processes, which was still hierarchical, with the National Command from the cities remaining the ultimate decision-making authority. Adela Cedillo (2010), argues that after some time there were two kinds of indigenous vanguards created internally: a) the "*Princes of the Selva*", and b) the "*Mayores*". The former, were indigenous leaders who had long been involved in struggles mainly regarding the agrarian issue without success, and possibly saw the armed struggle as the ultimate solution for their communities. They were responsible for conducting massive recruitment mainly amongst their already existing networks. Some of them left the organization when the decision to go to war was taken. The latter, were the first indigenous recruits of the FLN, the ones trained and

educated in the safehouses of the organization in San Cristobal and elsewhere, whose revolutionary consciousness was formed to a large extent by the FLN themselves. They were responsible for the initial contacts with the communities, and they mainly carried out individual recruitment amongst the indigenous community leaders. They were called *Mayores*, because –according to Cedillo- that was the maximum rank they had reached. Lately however, one of them, *Moisés,* has reached the rank of *Subcomandante* (Muñoz Ramírez 2013). Apart from the two groups of the indigenous "vanguard" in the mountains, however, another –more serious- subdivision also existed: that between the "mountains" and the "cities". The non-indigenous FLN/EZLN members who lived in the *Selva*, slowly creating what is today the EZLN, had long ceased to be the majority. In order, therefore, to be able to persuade the indigenous people they thought they would lead, they first had to understand them, learn their language and dialects, to be confronted with their realities. And so, the EZLN experienced its first "defeat", which was the one that allowed it to survive the *selva*, and surprise the world in 1994:

"We understood that there was a reality for which we were not prepared; we discovered the indigenous world, we got to know that they were not like any other kind of people, that they were not waiting for us, that we were not there to teach them all this that we had constructed for whatever [other] sector. We used to think that it was the same talking to a proletarian, a campesino, a worker or a student. They would all understand the word of the revolution. And we met a new world, in front of which we had no response… So this marxist-leninist group becomes confronted with a reality it cannot explain and it has to work with. It is to the credit of this military organization to recognise that it had no response and that it had to learn. It was the first defeat of the EZLN, the most important and that which will mark it from then onwards."(Le Bot and Marcos 1997)

At the same time, there was another contradiction that the indigenous members of the EZLN and the non-indigenous *Subcomandantes* could not fail to notice: while the EZLN was recruiting more and more members in Chiapas, the political and military authorities

of the organization were the *Comandantes* of the FLN in the cities, far away from the reality of Chiapas itself and the day to day executive issues. According to *ex-Subcomandante* Daniel, while the EZLN was growing stronger and stronger in the *selva*, the FLN were increasingly weakened in the cities, and if we exclude the indigenous members, they had a lot of trouble continuing their recruitment policy, especially while the international political context was also changing rapidly (the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas, fall and diregard of the Soviet Union etc.). Gunderson notes that the FLN also made an effort to establish one more *guerrilla* group, in Chihuahua this time, which they named *Frente Villista de Liberación Nacional.* The efforts began in 1988 however the *Frente Villista* never managed to achieve EZLN's popularity amongst the local populations and never went beyond a dozen or so recruits (Gunderson 2013, 478). It also appears that *Rodrigo* –the second in the FLN command- had already started planning the transformation of the FLN into a party, the *Partido de las Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional*, as ex-"Daniel" would later reveal:

"Guillen Vicente started to see that the international and national political situation was changing. Also internally, inside the organization. If the indigenous members were financing the cities, it was because there was no militancy in the cities. So, where was this mother-organization of the EZLN, the FLN? The safehouses of Mexico City were full of indigenous people studying radio-technology, medicine, skills for the war, but there were no city people. On the other hand, while Guillen was preparing the war, Rodrigo was considering that he had to transform the FLN into a political party and abandon the armed struggle."(DelaGrange and Rico 1999- author's translation from Spanish)

Therefore, with the EZLN in the mountains and the safehouses already having been "indigenized", both literally and metaphorically, growing stronger day by day and preparing itself for the Revolution, the leadership of the FLN in the cities were living in a different reality, already having second thoughts about the armed struggle, yet maintaining the upper hand in the internal decision making process. The clash between the "old" and the "emerging" leadership was imminent and it manifested itself first in

December 1992 with the decision of the communities to go to war, and later on in January 1993 at the crucial FLN meeting in Prado, which practically took away the ultimate authority from the FLN and passed it to the EZLN and the CCRI. From that moment onwards the EZLN, the "child" of the efforts of more than 20 years of the FLN, would break away from its parent organization and become an autonomous entity of its own[65].

The EZLN and their community in arms

As we have seen, the choice and the maintenance of the armed struggle strategy by the FLN was the product of a combination of factors. It was of course instigated by the perceived absence of alternative paths to social change, yet it was not an instinctive reaction to it. It was more a product of a) the historical experience of others at home and abroad that was acquired through active research, and well as of the FLN themselves, b) the conscious political and ideological preparation of the FLN/EZLN and their support bases, based on the results of the historical research they had carried out and their own experience, and c) an internal leadership change. What is particularly surprising, however, is the fact that all of the above, seem to have changed in the course of just 12 days: from the 1st to the 12th of January 1994. Or so it would appear. Because the reality may have been a bit more complicated.

[65] Though –at least to the author's knowledge- the EZLN never *officially* ceased being the military wing of the FLN.

Strategies change!

Subcomandante Marcos claims that the sole purpose of the1st of January for the movement was "to be heard". If that was the case, it was certainly not depicted in the First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle which spoke about marching all the way to the capital, Mexico City. It also seems that -at the very least- some lower ranking EZLN members really believed so as well:

"*As an insurgent, the idea and the thought was that we would prepare to wage the war against the government and then go on, as it says in the First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle***,** *to battle our way to the capital, and I was convinced of that. And that's how we trained, that's the idea we had*", Insurgent First Infantry Captain Federico would admit to Gloria Ramírez Muñoz (2008, 81). Or, as Compañero Raul would agree: "***…*** *we thought that our fight would make it to Mexico City, but then came the war and things happened in other ways*." (ibid.)

Therefore, it seems that if the First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle was not telling the whole truth, the rebels -at least the lowest ranking amongst them- had no idea about it. Subcomandante Marcos would later argue to Le Bot that the EZLN at the time was not an army ready to go on the offensive, and that the First Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, which was in any case a mixture of all the different ideological wings of the movement, was a bluff, in order to push the battles as far away as possible from the communities. He also admits that apart from being heard, and perhaps finding some allies within the political elites, they had no other plan because they did not foresee at the time any other military future for the EZLN. Consequently, although it is true that there was the dream that the people of Mexico would also rise up with the Zapatistas and overthrow the government (Le Bot and Marcos 1997; Bob 2005; several EZLN rebels interviews conducted by G. M. Ramírez 2013), it seems that the most tangible target for the EZLN is what Marcos frames as "enduring till August", when the Government, in order for the then upcoming

elections to be held would have to negotiate[66] (Le Bot and Marcos 1997). Indeed this is what actually happened, although a bit earlier than it was expected. Yet, what is the most surprising strategic move of the Zapatistas is that from this moment onwards they break from the revolutionary traditions known up until then, and instead of becoming yet another guerrilla movement like many others, they decide to switch to what Bob (2005) calls "armed nonviolence" and Holloway calls "community in arms". Needless to say, this move stemmed from necessity: since they knew they could not defeat the Mexican army, and since the national uprising they had been dreaming of for more than 10 (if not 25) years in the *selva* had not taken place, they had to abandon the "national" part of the struggle territorially speaking, and restructure themselves around the "local".

"We thought the people would either not pay attention to us, or come together with us to fight. But they did not react in either of these two ways. It turned out that all these people, who were thousands, tens of thousands, perhaps millions, did not want to rise up with us but…neither did they want us to be annihilated. They wanted us to dialogue. This completely broke our scheme and ended up defining zapatismo*, the* neo-zapatismo." Marcos would later recount to Le Bot.

Thus, unable to make the scale-shift they were hoping for, and since the Mexican society did rise up, but not in arms, there were only two options available for the EZLN: the retreat into the *selva*, in order to become yet another guerrilla movement, or the road of negotiations. They chose the latter, but with the numerous innovative tactics and (Encuentros, National and International Consultations) they adopted in the course and after the failure of the negotiations, and the change of political strategy that followed (autonomy), they opened up new paths for the revolutionary movements of our times, and beyond. Naturally, in this transformation, two issues played a very crucial role: the indigenous communities that had now fully "taken over" the EZLN; and the new leadership

[66] The Zapatistas strategic thinking was right as Carlos Salinas de Gortari admits in his autobiography. He also admits that in the first few days of the uprising, the government was really concerned that more groups would take up the arms outside Chiapas as well, so they deployed the army "above" Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Hidalgo, to avoid such a development. (Salinas de Gortari 2002, 798)

–including Marcos- who, breaking away from the traditional Marxist orientation of their parent organization, would now have to walk their own distinct path.

Entering the national, but not from the road of the armed struggle[67]

…and not only the national scene, but also Mexico City itself, as they had promised a few years earlier. The then *Mayor*, and now *Subcomandante*, Moisés used this phrase to describe to Le Bot exactly what happened in 1997 and later on in 2001 with the magnificent marches to Mexico City. And so it was that the Zapatistas found themselves in negotiations with the government. While it is certainly true that in the beginning of their struggle they believed that the political opportunities were closed and the only way forward was armed struggle, the solidarity movement which emerged after their uprising and the popularity they enjoyed amongst Mexican and International civil society, possibly made them believe that the government would have to listen to and satisfy their needs. Mexico and the world were watching after all, and that was the only reason why the government had to enter negotiations and could not eliminate them at first place. According to some until recently classified documents of the Mexican government that were published by Zorayda Gallegos in 2013 (Gallegos 2013), it seems that at that stage the government of Ernesto Zedillo was in a very difficult position, and the reason why it entered the road of negotiations itself was because its number one priority was to secure a victory for the PRI in the 1997 Congress elections. Complications with the nationally and internationally popular Zapatistas at that point would not have helped in that direction. However, the intentions of the government according to the secret documents were just to delay the process, trying in the meantime to restrain and weaken the EZLN on any possible front. Those strategies included:

a) low-intensity war in Chiapas through paramilitary organizations.
b) The activation of well-trusted intellectuals and legislators in order to take positions favourable to the government.

[67] Subcomandante Moisés to Yvon Le Bot (1997).

c) The organization of forums of specialists that would be in the direction of the governmental positions.
d) International lobbying of any business, governmental, and academic forum possible.
e) The mobilization of lawyers' associations that would adopt Zedillo's proposals.
f) 'Discrete' meetings with political parties, the Episcopacy, the army, selected embassies, and the Governor of Chiapas in order for them to act in accordance with the Government strategy.

However, despite this on-going war for cultural hegemony that was continuing behind the scenes, the EZLN embarked on a long journey of negotiations that lasted almost ten years in total, during which two moments can be described as critical: a) the March of the 1,111 of 1997 to celebrate the birth of the FZLN, and b) the glorious *Zapatour*, the March to Mexico City of 2001 ("March for the Indian Dignity-March of the People Who Are the Colour of the Earth", according to Marcos), just after the ousting of the PRI after 71 years, with Vicente Fox having been sworn in as President a few months earlier. In both these crucial moments, the Zapatistas decided to engage with national parliamentary politics, making their claims without, however, transforming themselves into a political party. And the question that arises is: why did they not do this? At both of these moments they enjoyed national and international recognition unprecedented for any revolutionary movement in global history, yet they choose not to translate it into electoral politics, making the Indigenous Rights issue their flagship, like –for example- the *cocaleros* of Bolivia did in 1995, after the introduction of the Law for Popular Participation (Kohl 2003).

While the present work cannot provide a definite answer to that question, it would argue that the reasons are mostly related to path dependency: the Zapatistas, ever since the electoral reform of 1974 (still FLN back then), did not believe in social change through electoral politics. And moving into electoral politics, at the heyday of their national popularity, would have been a serious blow for the legitimacy of the EZLN amongst their supporters. They did, however, decide to do try the strategy of demand-making and travelled all the way to Mexico City at least four times by then, in order to put pressure on the respective governments and to strengthen their demands for the approval of the San

Andrés Accords, which would mean the institutionally recognized autonomy of the indigenous communities. John Ross (2006) opines that until that time the Zapatistas did really believe that the government(s) would listen to their cause and grant them autonomy. But even if they did not, nobody could now accuse them of not having given it a try.

No more demands. Autonomy!

On 1st January 2003, having exhausted the road of dialogue with the government, as well as that of "big R" Revolution, the Zapatistas decided to "*…abandon the politics of demands, and with it, all contact with the state*" (Holloway 2010, 241) and concentrate on building their own autonomous, horizontal forms of self-government with their own means. In other words, to ignore the state as an institution and "*act as if they had already won*" (Esteva, as cited in Holloway 2010, 50) . "*We don't have to ask the government's permission to be autonomous*", announced "Bruce Lee", of the CCRI in San Cristobal, on that commemoration of the 1994 uprising (Ross 2006). Or, as Major Infantry Insurgent Moisés put it in an interview with Gloria Muñoz:

"*The dialogue with the government didn't work but it enriched us, because we met more people and it gave us more ideas. After the "Color of the Earth march" (2001) we said that with or without a law we were going to build our government the way we wanted*."(Muñoz Ramírez 2008)

And they moved on to announce the death of the Aguascalientes, and the birth of the *Caracoles*[68]. Five caracoles were created, and each had and still has a Junta de Buen Gobierno (JBG) established in it, responsible for its own Zapatista Autonomous Rebel Municipal Zone (MAREZ). The five caracoles are the following:

[68] In Mesoamerica, the *caracoles* (shells) were what used to call the community to a meeting. In the Zapatista discourse, they also represent the "spiral" through which the outside world enters the Zapatista one, and the Zapatista gets to know the outside. (Ross 2006)

“The Mother of Caracoles- Sea of Dreams” (La Realidad)

“The Whirlwind of Our Words” (Morelia- 17 de Noviembre)

“Resistance Until the New Dawn” (La Garrucha- Fransisco Gomez)

“The Caracol That Speaks for All” (Robero Barrios)

“Resistance and Rebellion for Humanity” (Oventik)

Each Zapatista *caracol* has a JBG situated in it, responsible for a specific autonomous Zone. Sometimes the municipalities and communities in each Zone are not distributed geographically but in other ways (ethnic composition, distance from the *caracol* etc). Each *caracol* also has a clinic, normally a primary and/or secondary school, while each of them is also involved in one form or another with one of the five Projects of Zapatismo: health, education, agro-ecology, politics, and information. But before moving on to describe how Zapatista autonomous self-governance works, it would be useful to follow the Zapatista demands throughout the years, as they have been expressed in the six –so far- Declarations of Selva Lacandona.

Usos y costumbres…para tod@s!

The demands of EZLN have largely revolved both around the recognition of the rights of the indigenous people to live and govern themselves according to their “*usos y costumbres,*” their local practices and customs (Jung 2003), but also around more general issues that are at the same time local and universal: the 13 Zapatista demands. Those “*usos y costumbres*” of course do not constitute just a phrase with no practical meaning. As Hernandez-Castillo (2006, 121) summarizes, they “*would have allowed indigenous peoples to exercise their own forms of social, political, economic and cultural organization, enforce their governance systems in the resolution of internal conflicts, obtain access to the jurisdiction of the state while retaining their cultural specificity, and enjoy rights to their lands and access to the natural resources they contained*.”

Although some authors, like Carlos Tello (Tello Díaz 1995) for example, would argue that the EZLN shift from revolution to democracy and indigenous rights is an opportunistic reaction to the collapse of communism worldwide since 1991, the facts themselves prove him wrong: on January, 1 1994, three years after the "collapse of communism worldwide" and four years after the electoral defeat of Sandinismo, for example, the Zapatistas were still waving the flag of the Revolution. At the same time, if we look closely at the Zapatista demands as they are portrayed in the Six Declarations of Selva Lacandona, we discover that they have been rather consistent and coherent since the beginning of their struggle and the First Declaration of Lacandona Jungle (EZLN 1994 January). In it, they state their determination to "*advance to the capital of the country, overcoming the Mexican federal Army, protecting in our advance the civilian population and permitting the people in the liberated area the right to freely and democratically elect their own administrative authorities*". And they go on to state the 11 demands that the EZLN was fighting for: work, land, housing, food, health-care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace.

The same 11 initial demands are present in the Second (EZLN 1994b June) and the Third Declaration of Selva Lacandona (EZLN 1995 January), while in the Fourth Declaration (EZLN 1996 January) they have added the demand for cultural reservation and that of access to information. In the Fifth Declaration of Selva Lacandona, published 2 years later (EZLN 1998), they call for "*the rights of the indigenous peoples to be recognized in the Political Constitution of Mexico*". Lastly, in the Sixth Declaration of Selva Lacandona (EZLN 2005), the EZLN asks for the same 13 demands to be included in a New Constitution , and it also announces the launch of its "Other Campaign". However, the Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona came after the announcement of the Zapatista autonomy, and will be discussed later on in this chapter.

It is a fact that the issue of *indigenous rights* was not considered a special issue at the beginning of the movement and had never been a central concern for the FLN/EZLN. As Marcos admits to Le Bot (1997- author's translation from Spanish):

"In the beginning in our perspective of guerrillas, they (indigenous peoples) were exploited people whom we had to organize and show the way to...They were blind and we had to open their eyes; but through our contact with them, and through those translators and political leaders like viejo *Antonio, the EZLN started to understand its history of political function, its consciousness, its political consciousness."*

It is also indicative to notice how the FLN described the inhabitants of Chiapas in their Nepantla Editorial, in which they describe why they had describe Mexico's southeastern-most region as a theatre for their operations: "Indigenous people in their majority" they say "the farmers of those lands (Chiapas)" are antagonistic to capital. For those interested in semiotics, it is indicative that the emphasis is placed on the fact that the inhabitants of Chiapas are farmers, while the fact that they are indigenous is secondary in their rhetoric[69].

Ex-FLN-militant *Rene* would also admit to Adela Cedillo (2010) that they never spoke of defending indigenous rights at the beginning. For them, all people were equal and they did not think that there was need for special rights of anyone. In addition, there were certain characteristics of the indigenous way of life -the way the FLN were viewing it- such as *machismo* or alcoholism, which they were against. The indigenous question is only mentioned once by the FLN, in their 1980 Statutes (FLN 2003):

"*The State guarantees to the indigenous groups the right to recover their lands; to conceal and to conserve their cultures, dialects and customs, respecting their forms of social organization*."

Although Cedillo is right to notice that back then the indigenous question was just one issue among many others for the FLN, the fact that it is now mentioned is probably one the first signs of the internal transformation that the organization had started undergoing. And it seems that this transformation, this introduction of the FLN to the indigenous reality, starts taking place sometime between 1978 and 1980 (when the Statutes are published), and it may very well be related with the coexistence of the indigenous and the *mestizo* members of the organization in the safe-house of San

[69] Otherwise it would have been: "Farmers in their majority, the indigenous of those lands…"

Cristobal. This transformation would become more and more intense in the years that followed, and would also introduce the then strictly hierarchical FLN/EZLN to new ways of organizing and decision making: autonomy and communal assembly (Ross 2006, 191). Both of these characteristics of the Zapatista movement, which are dominant today and which made it an inspiration for many other movements around the globe such as the GJM for example(Della Porta 2009), were not brought to Chiapas by the FLN. They had always been internal characteristics of the indigenous way of life, in one form or another[70], even more so in an area from which the State was absent, where it was necessary to come up with their own ways of improving their lives. They were then appropriated by the Maoist groups that had worked in Chiapas earlier, giving the community assembly a more direct, democratic and emancipatory tone. Therefore, the FLN who came from the cities with the idea of creating a vanguard, with all the hierarchical connotations this implies, with their non-democratic decision making processes and with the idea of walking the "state-power" road, would be totally transformed into what today is the EZLN. And that would happen through the everyday experience of living with the indigenous communities, and this transformation would later (in 1992-3) "demand" to translate itself into the power-relations and the internal structure of the FLN. In the previous chapter, we saw how that took place.

However, Zapatismo is not about indigenous rights only. It is also about more universal rights/demands as those are expressed in the Six -so far- Declarations of the Lacandona Jungle. In addition, it is not about Chiapas only: This became obvious ever since the 1994 "Dialogues of the Cathedral," when the Zapatistas responded with the famous "para todos todo -nada para nosotros" to the government's Chiapas-limited proposals. Furthermore, through their regular initiatives (Meetings, Escuelitas, Marches), the Zapatistas have never abandoned the tactic of creating local, national, and international (or even… intergalactic) networks that abide to the same principles and demands.

[70] In Chiapas at least, we know that before the arrival of the liberation theology clergy, the Maoist activists, and -eventually- the FLN, assemblyism was part of the indigenous communal life; an assemblyism that was rather patriarchal (in the sense that only the community elders and married men were involved) and that was excluding women and young unmarried men.

Moreover, what is probably the over-arching theme in the Zapatista struggle, one that connects both the FLN and the EZLN periods, is their focus on anti-capitalism.

Anti-capitalism

The Zapatistas, since the beginning of their struggle have always been an anti-capitalist revolutionary movement, and their strategies have always had overturning capitalism as a goal. For the FLN, according to their Statutes (1980), the enemies were north American imperialism and capitalist exploitation, which was implemented in Mexico by the local bourgeoisie. Their proposed alternative was socialism, in which the means of production would be socially owned and which would be administered by "a unique political party" in Marxist-Leninist fashion (ibid).

The EZLN now, is probably one of the first revolutionary movements that made resistance to neoliberalism central amongst their targets. Already in 1996 they organized the Intergalactic Meeting for the Civil Society and Against Neoliberalism, while their anti-neoliberal arguments are central in many of the communiques of Sup Marcos and the EZLN over the years. However, they are not against neoliberalism only, and they make that even more clear in the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle. Here, it is interesting to note that while the first five declarations of the Lacandona Jungle have no reference to capitalism or socialism (there is one reference to each in the Second Declaration, but only in a long list of possible socio-economic systems), in the Sixth Declaration the word capitalism appears 22 times. They analyze capitalism as a social system, the way the Zapatistas view it, and they declare themselves anti-capitalists:

"Capitalism is a social system, a way in which a society goes about organizing things and people, and who has and who has not, and who gives orders and who obeys. In capitalism, there are some people who have money, or capital, and factories and stores and fields and many things, and there are others who have nothing but their strength and knowledge in order to work. In capitalism, those who have money and things give the orders, and those

who only have their ability to work obey." (Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, 2005)

In addition, the Zapatistas have long noticed the fact that global capital now has the ability to transcend borders and to impose its rules on states and governments. In *La Sexta* they argue:

"And so the capitalism of today is not the same as before, when the rich were content with exploiting the workers in their own countries, but now they are on a path which is called Neoliberal Globalization. This globalization means that they no longer control the workers in one or several countries, but the capitalists are trying to dominate everything all over the world. And the world, or Planet Earth, is also called the "globe", and that is why they say "globalization," or the entire world." (ibid.)

Of course, overturning capitalism (and later on its most extreme version, neoliberalism) has always played a central role in Zapatista political strategies as well. After all, why would the FLN want to conquest state power if not in order to establish a socialist state; thus, to beat U.S. imperialism and overturn capitalism? The Zapatista autonomy did not come about by accident either. The EZLN and the BAEZLN, have first-hand experience of the embeddedness of the state as an institution in the neoliberal globalization and the globalized market they oppose. They have seen that in their negotiations with the government which was ready to recognize their cultural rights, but not their collective rights to the land on which they live; exactly because that would stop -or at least limit- the penetration of global capital in those lands. Therefore, they chose the road of autonomy, an autonomy in which they try to build non-capitalist social and economic relations and they try to safeguard that their natural -and otherwise- resources will be managed collectively by the people who live on the lands where they happen to be found.

La autonomia Zapatista as a "non-plan"

How did the Zapatistas make their strategic shift towards autonomy though? While it is true that the EZLN have been consistent in their demands ever since the First

Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, one cannot fail to notice that autonomy is not amongst them. The first time the issue of autonomy is mentioned in a public document by the Zapatistas was on March,1 1994 in a document in which the EZLN presents its demands to the government during the Dialogues of the Cathedral (CCRI del E Z L N 1994a). It has previously mentioned in a couple of interviews of Subcomandante Marcos, in which he had argued:

"We ask that the principal demands of the *campesinos* of Chiapas are resolved: bread, health, education, autonomy, and peace." (L'Unitá January 4, 1994)

And when the correspondents of *La Jornada* asked him a month later he said:

"The *compañeros* say autonomy, like the one of the Basques, or the Catalan one, which is a relative autonomy because they have a big-big distrust towards the state authorities. For example, it is not so much the federal army that they hate, it is the security, the state police, the judiciary, that if they see us they are going to eat us in small pieces. So, they say that we have to negotiate an autonomous status in which our government, our administrative structure, will be recognized by the government and we can live like that. Without them messing with us." (La Jornada 1994)

That fact allows us to assume that the shift from the Revolution to autonomy took place at some point between January and February 1994, and took an official written form with the publication of the aforementioned communique of March, 1 of the same year. What happened in-between?

Guillermo Trejo (2012:14) argues that the Zapatista strategic shift towards autonomy was a response to electoral fraud and relative political deprivation:

"Even though the Zapatista uprising motivated Mexico's ruling elite to introduce a major national electoral reform by which the government and the PRI surrendered their ability to manipulate electoral outcomes, allowing for a relatively clean presidential election in 1994, the Zapatista-supported leftist candidate to the governorship of Chiapas was defeated by fraud. At a time of national political liberalization, Zapatista communities confronted by fraud and paramilitary repression and authoritarian reversion opted to gain

de facto territorial controls and establish parallel governments, claiming legitimacy under ILO Convention 169."

I disagree. The regional elections Trejo is referring to took place in late August 1994, together with the presidential ones. However, the demands of autonomy and self-determination were already being expressed publically by the EZLN since -at least-February/March of the same year, if not earlier in Sup Marcos' interviews. Therefore, even the sequence of the events alone proves that Trejo is wrong in that argument of his. At the same time, repression was not a new phenomenon in Chiapas either. What is still puzzling however is where the idea for autonomy came from.

The information is scarce, but what we know for sure is that after the Revolutionary (with capital R) plan of the EZLN failed, once a ceasefire was announced, the EZLN returned to its communities in arms to consult them on how to proceed. We also know that while the demand for autonomy was not present in the first Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, it did appear on a communique the CCRI published on 1 March 1994, and was expressed by Subcomandante Marcos in a couple of interviews in January and February 1994 already. Therefore, we could assume that this Plan B of Zapatismo was decided upon within that time period. It was however a "non Plan" since, while autonomy was the desired "destination", it seems that they had no pre-made step-by-step-plan on how to get there. Therefore, they relied to the "*preguntando caminamos*" strategy from that moment onwards, always having in mind what they wanted to achieve yet not having planned how exactly to proceed. This Plan B was in this sense a "non plan," and the strategy that came out of it was an "anti-strategy" in a way, as John Holloway has put it. And so, the Zapatistas embarked on a long process of negotiations with the government in order to legitimize their autonomy while at the same time they were developing it further. And when *de jure* legitimization failed, they focused on the *de facto* one.

We can also surmise that this change of strategy is a product of the internal shift in decision making processes of Zapatismo that had taken place a year earlier: now the communities were responsible for taking the strategic decisions horizontally, and the community assembly became the body in which those were discussed. Of course, the

foundations of Zapatista autonomy were already in place. They had been placed during the long decade before the uprising: the EZLN was the first Zapatista entity that declared autonomy from its mother organization the FLN, the CCRI became its governing body, while the communities were now responsible for taking all the decisions in a direct democratic way through their assemblies. Even some self-made clinics were already in place since 1989, years before the uprising. Therefore, a parallel state structure, with its own institutions was already functioning in the Highlands and the jungles of Chiapas already. The only thing left was to improve and legitimize it, if not *de jure* at least *de facto*.

"We are autonomous with or without the law"- Esther

As Tormey (2006, 138) argues, at the very time that these lines are being written, in the Chiapas region of Mexico an experiment was taking place, an experiment which takes contemporary politics beyond representation; instead it is directed towards direct democracy and self-governance. In what follows, it will be attempted to analyze what this experiment involves, based on secondary sources, as well as on participant observation conducted in three Zapatista *caracoles*, and two communities-Support Bases –BAEZLN, as well as through participation in the first round of the *Escuelita Zapatista* of August 2013.

The Zapatista decision-making process, the way of "governing by obeying" as they call it ("Mandar Obedeciendo"), has two pillars (Estrada-Saavedra 2005, 540):

a) The EZLN, and

b) the armed communities in rebellion.

Those two pillars constitute *Zapatismo*.

The **EZLN** is structured *"from top to bottom by the leadership, the Clandestine Revolutionary Committee (CCRI), the High Command, the officers, the insurgent forces and the militants*." (ibid). The CCRI is the body that effectively commands the army. It is also responsible for publishing the communiqués as well as for the day-to-day decision-making. It answers to the communities but the decisions in the EZLN are taken in a hierarchical manner[71]. At the head of the EZLN is Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos and –since 2013- also Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés.

The **armed communities in rebellion**, on the other hand, are structured from the bottom up, with the main decision making body being the community. The community discusses all the contemporary issues in the community assembly – usually in the church (Solís 2005), the basketball court, or the school (author's fieldwork notes, summer 2012)- in which everyone has the right to express their opinion and everybody above 12 years old has a vote. Each and every community sends one of its members to represent it in the municipality, also known as the Clandestine Regional Committee (or *Cabecera*). Each municipality consists of 50 to 100 communities and directly answers to the Good Government Juntas (GGJs), which were introduced in 2003, each of which represents a number of municipalities. The GGJs constitute the ultimate decision making body in Zapatismo. They have full executive, juridical, and political power. They also control and make use of the financial resources of the Zapatistas, (which come from the Zapatista Projects and the civil society donations) and also direct the provision of public services (education and health) in the area of their responsibility. They also set up sustainable development projects in order to promote the self-funding potential of the communities as well as to reduce the dependency on external funding together with the poverty and marginalization levels which remain high in the area as Villafuerte-Solis (Solís 2005)

[71] "It is an army, and it is hierarchical like all armies" I was told, during my fieldwork by a senior Zapatista member.

demonstrates. The members of the GGJ rotate every 8-15 days[72], so that the Zapatistas can fight corruption, which could appear in the form of "professional leaders". In addition, in this way the whole community gets involved in the "art" of self-governing. The link between the EZLN and the community is the *responsible (el responsible)*. According to Estrada-Saavedra sometimes the *responsible* appears to impose the decisions of the leadership on the communities, however, while it is the opposite which should happen. It must be said that nothing of the sort was experienced in the fieldwork carried out for this project.

The Zapatistas themselves, in a series of communiqués published in August 2004 and signed by Subcomandante Marcos regarding the first year of operations of the GGJs (see table below) admit that they have made that mistake in their political work; as Marcos puts it, sometimes the EZLN ends up dictating to the communities: *"…accompaniment has sometimes turned into management, advice into orders and support into a hindrance*" (EZLN 2004 August). Marcos, in the same series of communiqués admits one additional "error" that the Zapatistas make: there has been not much progress regarding the female participation in GGJs (JBG):

"*It is a shame, but we have to be honest: we still cannot give a good report regarding women in the creation of conditions for their gender development*" (ibid). The same is true today, although the situation is much better at the level of the EZLN General Command: 50% of its members are now women (summer fieldwork 2012).

[72] In the Caracol of Oventik where I spent one month during my summer fieldwork of 2012, I observed at first hand the rotation in the GGJ, which took place every 8 days.

Data on the first year of the Good Government Juntas

JBG	Annual Income	Annual Expenditures
R. Barrios	1,600,00 pesos	1,000,000 pesos
Morelia	1,050,000 pesos	900,000 pesos
La Garrucha	600,000 pesos	300,000 pesos
Oventik	4,500,000 pesos	3,500,000 pesos
La Realidad	5,000,000 pesos	4,000,000 pesos

Source: EZLN , August 2004

With regard to the relationship between the state authorities and those of the Zapatistas, it seems that there is a necessary coexistence. The state recognizes the "illegal but legitimate" authority (Earle and Simonelli 2005, 79) of the GGJs in the Zapatista territories, while the autonomous municipalities at times allow the State some authority in their territories and when requested the GGJs transfer specific cases that do not belong to their jurisdiction to the state authorities[73]. This does not always happen, however. Richard Stahler-Sholk (Stahler-Sholk 2007, 56) notes that there have been cases in which Zapatista communities are visited by government authorities and …"all of a sudden, nobody can speak Spanish."

[73] For example, in the case of Chiapas State elections of 2004, the Electoral Commission had to present themselves to the various GGJs of Chiapas in order to reach an agreement that would allow the Electoral Commission to work in the autonomous municipalities. In that case, it must be said, the GGJs and the state authorities ended up coordinating really well (ibid.) The same, however, was not observed nor heard during fieldwork in Chiapas at the time of the 2012 Presidential Elections.

To sum up, the self-governance that the Zapatistas exercise in their autonomous municipalities seems to have been *de facto* recognized by the State authorities and, in fact, they constitute a *de facto* autonomous region within the state of Mexico. Naturally, the decision-making process is not perfect, and there are still many problems to be solved and improvements to be made. For example, as the Zapatistas themselves have time and again emphasized despite the fact that 50% of the Commanders of the EZLN are women, there's still improvements to be made on issues of gender equality and women's participation in the Zapatista communities. In certain cases *machismo* is still prevalent, especially when it comes to the *compañeras'* fathers and husbands even though they may be otherwise Zapatistas. In addition, in some cases the women, especially those who have not attended the Zapatista autonomous education -which means they probably never had access to any kind of education- have limited knowledge of Spanish, or reading and writing skills. In other cases they may also not have support at home, which means that their participation in the autonomous structures stays behind. Neil Harvey (2016) also notes that there's also the fear of not fulfilling their duties well, which rooted in the fact that women in these areas have never had such kind of duties that restricted to the men. In my own experience in Chiapas, I have noticed a big generational and educational difference when it comes to gender issues in the Zapatista communities. While in older generations *machismo* is still prevalent, and in most of the cases women have limited knowledge of Spanish, younger generations especially those who have participated in Zapatista autonomous education show a different attitude towards women, and in most cases demonstrate literacy in Spanish. Just to give an example, during my participation in the *Escuelita Zapatista* I was hosted by a Zapatista family in the community *Las Malvinas*, which corresponds to the caracol of Roberto Barrios. I was accompanied by a young Zapatista, graduate of the Zapatista schools, who acted as my translator/guide in the community, since the -Chol- family did not speak Spanish. The family was rather traditional in terms of gender relations, with the mother and the wives of the male members doing all the housework and the male father and son having the role of the "bread-winner." However, I noticed that even the male members were washing themselves their own dishes and utensils after every meal-

something that would not happen where I am coming from for example, the island of Crete. When I commented that to my guide, he said:

“They are older generations. Nowadays we (the men) cook and wash together with the *compañeras.”*

My two-month stay in the caracol of Oventik, where there is a boarding Zapatista Secondary School in which dozens boys and girls from the surrounding communities live and study together, confirms that. All the duties were shared by girls and boys.

Other problems faced by the Zapatista nowadays are related to the limited resources they have and the fact that they are not completely self-subsistent. Due to the fact that they currently live in two social worlds, the anti-capitalist Zapatista and the capitalist non-Zapatista, and since they are dependent on the latter for certain products and services that the former does not produce (cars, mobile phones, computers, etc.), sometimes they choose to migrate in search of a job to the United States or other parts of Mexico (Quintana Roo for example is a popular destination with many Zapatistas working in the hotel and construction industries of Cancún and other cities).

Furthermore, due to the fact that each *caracol* and each *Junta* constitutes by itself an autonomous entity within the Zapatista autonomy, sometimes there is a lack of coordination between different caracoles/juntas/regions in certain common projects, which would have facilitated them. Sometimes there’s also issues of unequal power relations between the EZLN and the communities. But as Subcomandante Marcos argued in his August 2004 communiqués:

“…don’t get upset, we are still learning.”

With the creation of the autonomous municipalities, the Zapatistas finally rejected “both revolutionary vanguardism and state-oriented reformism” (Holloway 2010). What motivated them to shift from the “state-power” road of the Revolution, and the demand making to elected officials, to the “non-state power” road of autonomy and self-governance, is a combination of things.

First of all the experience with autonomy that the Zapatista communities had already acquired, even before the uprising, mainly due to the absence of the State from the area, and the occupation of this vacant space by the communities themselves, but also through their experience with the Maoist activists and their direct democratic assemblies. This experience also manifested itself in the organizational structure of the EZLN, which from the beginning had an autonomous perspective: the new recruits were taught some skills that would be useful for the organization, and then they themselves became instructors for the future recruits. The same idea is visible in the Zapatista autonomous education system. Every new graduate becomes himself/herself a *promotor/a*, responsible for transferring the knowledge they acquired in their respective field to the future generations. In this way, the *promotores/as* of education become teachers, those of agro-ecology become instructors in the agro-ecology projects of the Zapatistas, those of health become healers and nurses, those of politics assist the political work of the JBG, while those of information technology work and instruct others in their field. The Zapatistas, therefore, had already seen in practice the benefits of autonomous organizations. But they had seen its limits too, and for this reason they intended to make it *de-jure*. In addition, another reason that led them to declare autonomy from the State was the fact that they had exhausted both the Revolutionary and the parliamentary road for improving their living standards: the 1994 uprising did not spark a nation-wide Revolution, while the negotiations with the government also failed. Last but not least, the indigenous communities had acquired through their autonomous self-organization and their participation in the EZLN struggle, what they had not gained by any other form of struggle:

For many of them, this was **land** through redistribution. It was one of the unfulfilled promises of the Mexican Revolution that the official State had never completed. For the State land is not communal, but a product that can be “sold and bought”, but for the Zapatistas it is redistributed in the *ejidal* form. In the first six months of the uprising alone more than 50.000 hectares of land had been occupied by the EZLN (Harvey 1998, 2). During my fieldwork I was given some approximate calculations of the land the Zapatistas have

recuperated over the years from the state and rich landowners. According to the Zapatistas themselves, we are talking about 91.100 hectares distributed as follows:

La Realidad -27.700 hectares

La Garrucha- 33.000 hectares

Morelia – 28.000 hectares

R. Barrios- 3.200 hectares

Oventik- 0 hectares

For others, it was **collective services** that the official State had never provided in these areas. And not just that, but also alternative services, adjusted to the needs and the culture of the indigenous people. Healthcare, for example, with indigenous natural medicine, assisted by the agro-ecology project that focuses on the production of natural medicine. It is also cheap, affordable for the communities, costing just 20 pesos a visit. Furthermore, education adjusted to their distinctive local needs and history, bilingual (tsotsil/chol/tseltal/tojolabal-castilliano), free and in every single community.

For those previously excluded it was **Participation**. Participation in the decision-making, the development projects, the administrative bodies with *turnos*, the commons. Politics in the Zapatista communities is a daily emancipatory and participatory process. In addition- and it is extremely important- **emancipation** for women[74]! A cultural revolution in and of itself, which is a novelty that the communities came to know through Zapatismo. And finally, **dignity** (Holloway 1998): something that the State and the official *mestizaje* culture never allowed them to have. Of course, all of the above can be observed at varying level depending on the region/community, but they are there, and they wouldn't have been there without Zapatismo.

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[74] Of course this is an ongoing process which is by no means complete. There's still a long way to go when it comes to gender equality in Chiapas, however it is a process that has already begun and has already shown some fruits, The fact that there now are women *comandantas*, *promotoras*, *alumnas* and *guerilleras* is already a sign that things are changing in the Zapatista communities.

However, Zapatismo and its autonomy also have their disadvantages. The main ones noticed while living with the Zapatistas for a short while are the following:

Zapatismo currently constitutes a parallel, semi-isolated universe. This means that the communities have to live in two worlds (two boats), that of the capitalist State, and that of communitarian Zapatismo. For example, the Zapatista education is not recognized by the State. Therefore, if a graduate of the Zapatista education wishes to continue his/her education at the University level, they would have start all over again from primary school, despite having completed all the stages of the Zapatista process. It is a parallel universe under attack and competition by its official, bigger, parallel universe which also happens to control institutions like the army, the police, the paramilitaries, and which is able to start competitive development projects like that of the “sustainable rural cities” etc. This is something that Zapatismo lacks the necessary resources to compete with. There is also Dependency on the civil society, national and international. Furthermore, as Marcos also admits, Zapatismo always needs to come up with new initiatives in order to keep the civil society interest high and avoid isolation.

¡La Sexta!

This isolation is what brought about the necessity of establishing a network of like-minded, non-electoral, anti-capitalist organizations throughout the country. The Zapatistas realized at a very early stage that even if they were to gain their autonomy, and even if the Chiapas experiment were actually successful, its impact on the rest of the country would remain minimal unless other organizations decided to follow the EZLN in its “non-state power” endeavour. Therefore, from the period of the FZLN they set out to create a network of like-minded organizations, which would be anti-capitalist, non-electoral, non-violent, and which would maintain their autonomy from the state. The FZLN

experiment was not very successful and was weakened over time, which led the Zapatistas to decide to renew this intention of theirs with the Other Campaign initiative (*Sexta Internacional* for beyond Mexico), which took an even more active role than its FZLN predecessor. The Other Campaign saw Subcomandante Marcos (renamed as *Delegado Zero*) travel around the country on his motorbike, meeting communities and organizations and establishing the network the Zapatistas had been dreaming of. However, this effort did not go as planned either. The Calderón government responded with heavy repression that was disproportionately directed towards the adherents of the Other Campaign. It would seem that the Zapatistas got the message as for a period they stopped promoting this initiative. At the same time, it also seems that the Zapatistas would like to apply the lessons learnt from the previous experiments to the Sexta-EZLN: they appear to be more selective in their selection of comrades, excluding from the offset those interested in the "state-power road". "*For "historic" and "opportunistic" actions there are other spaces that you will surely find comfortable. We don't just want to change the government; we want to change the world*."(Marcos 2013) they proclaimed in January 2013. And they define the Sexta as a long-term process, a revolution with a small r. A very important dimension of the Sexta, one that is directly related to Zapatismo's ideology is the fact that it is anti-capitalist, not simply anti-neoliberal. Anti-capitalist just like the social-relations the Zapatistas are constructing in their autonomous communities. In relation to the Sexta, however, it must be said that it is still early to jump into conclusions: it is just making its first steps.

Conclusion (or, “Preliminary answers to persistent questions”)

What constitutes Zapatismo today, with its autonomous self-organization, and its horizontal forms of decision making (as far as the communities are concerned, because the army is still hierarchical), is a product of a historical transformation, based on the past experience of the group itself, as well as of others; on necessity; and a very important internal shift in leadership and cosmo-vision that took place sometime in the late-80s-early-90s. It is also a product of experimenting with different forms of struggle, carried out either by itself or its constituent members.

The mechanism through which the FLN/EZLN decided to choose the *via armada* at the beginning of their struggle, before subsequently moving to the “non-state power road” of autonomy, involved a long political and ideological preparation on behalf the FLN/EZLN and the communities themselves, which was based on; a) an in-depth study of previous revolutionary political experiences in Mexico and the world in order to repeat their successes and avoid their mistakes, and; b) the active training and ideological formation of their cadres, based on the results of their investigation.

Through this transformation process, the two different worlds that met to produce the EZLN, the indigenous and the urban, came to believe that nothing could be achieved through the “electoral route”. However, the “Insurgent” route that they first experimented with did not go as they had hoped. Therefore, they became involved in a continuous reformulation of their political strategies, a “non plan,” depending on their available resources and the political opportunities available at each given time. As a result they decided to –at least try- to get involved in the politics of demand-making, without, however, giving this process an electoral dimension, responding to the political climate that had been formed at the time within the Mexican and international civil society. And when the demand-making strategy also failed, they decided to depend on the strategy they had already experienced throughout the years: that of *de facto* autonomy.

Thus, the choice of the “road” to social change was not a purely rational one for the Zapatistas. It was more formed by path-dependent adaptation based on theirs and others historical experience, both at home and abroad, which was acquired through active research and investigation of resonating historical cases, but also through direct experimentation. Once they had made their decisions, they also got involved in a process of active training of the movements’ constituencies to secure the ideological hegemony of the choice made.

When they now chose to change (or not to change) “road”, they did so because of lack of resources to make the necessary scale-shift, which led to the failure of the previous road. A change in the internal power-relations also played a role, yet their options were always shaped through path-dependence and ideology, which became the “filters” through which certain options (autonomy) were preferred and others (electoral politics) were rejected.

CHAPTER VI
The Devil's Leaf

CHAPTER VI

"THE DEVIL'S LEAF"

Centuries before the advent of cocaine, coca was "the Devil's leaf".

Since the Indians of the Andes chewed it in their pagan ceremonies, the church included coca among the idolatries to be extirpated. But far from disappearing, coca plantations grew fiftyfold. The Spaniards realized the plant was indispensable to mask hunger and exhaustion among the multitudes digging silver out of the bowels of Cerro Rico in Potosi.

In time, the colonial lords also embraced coca. As a tea, it cured indigestion and colds, relieved pain, renewed vigour, and eased altitude sickness.

Nowadays, coca is still sacred to the indigenous peoples of the Andes and it remains good medicine for anyone. But airplanes destroy the fields to keep coca from becoming cocaine.

Of course, cars kill many more people than cocaine and nobody talks about outlawing the wheel.

Eduardo Galeano, Mirrors

(Galeano 2009, 136)

CHAPTER VI

THE DEVIL'S LEAF

Where one journey ends, another begins

The first interview on my Bolivian case study was -paradoxically enough- conducted in San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico. It was during the first *Escuelita Zapatista* of August 2013 and since I knew that Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar would also be there, I asked to meet her to talk about her "second" home country, Bolivia. Raquel is Mexican and was studying mathematics at the UNAM in the 1980s, where she met her ex-companion Álvaro García Linera, Bolivia's current Vice-president, with whom she became one of the founding members of the revolutionary Ejercito Guerillero Tupak Katari, an action for which they spent several years in Bolivian prisons. When she got out of prison, aside from participating in Bolivia's social struggles during the cycle of protest of 2000-2005, Raquel went on to do a PhD in sociology at the *Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla* (BUAP) where today she teaches as a professor of sociology. Raquel told me many interesting things both on and off the record, however one argument of hers got stuck in my mind: That the *cocaleros* decided to form a party as an extension of the movement, in order to gain territorial control over a region from which the state had long been absent and was now trying to enter, mainly through the Popular Participation Law of 1994. "*And what did that*

mean in those times in Bolivia? [among other things] Control over the state police![75]" Little did I know that a month and a half later I would find myself being interrogated in the military camp of the infamous *Leopardos*, the militarized special anti-drug unit Unidad Movil Para el patrullaje Rural (UMOPAR), in their headquarters in Chimoré . But let us take things from the beginning.

The place where it rains a lot

El Chapare (known to the Incas as "Ancha Para" (Ramos Salazar 2012, 20) or "the place where it rains a lot" is an administrative and geographical region in the heart of the country, which due to its dense tropical vegetation and its difficult access, was colonized rather late by the Bolivian state. It is comprised of three tropical zones: Carrasco, Chapare, and Tiraque. According to several accounts the region's modern colonization began in the 1920s, when the construction of the first road that would pass through the region was initiated. In 1938 – thanks to the forced labour of the Paraguayan prisoners of the *Guerra del Chaco*[76]- the road finally reached San Antonio (modern-day Villa Tunari) (Spedding 2005; Albro 2005; Grisaffi 2013; Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008). In those years, Chapare became something like the utopian pirate islands that Hakim Bey (Bey 1997) describes in his Temporary Autonomous Zone, a "pirate island" that was occupied by people from all over

[75] Personal interview with Gutiérrez Aguilar, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 10-08-2013 in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.

[76] La Guerra del Chaco (War of Chaco) or La Guerra de la Sed (War of Thirst) was a war fought between Bolivia and Paraguay between 1932 and 1935 over the control of the Chaco territory. Two thirds of the Chaco was controlled by Paraguay as a result of the war.

the country (mostly from Oruro, Potosi, Cochabamba, and La Paz). Migrants from diverse socio-political backgrounds moved to the region either to escape from the slavery of the *haciendas* of the lowlands, as was the case of the first colonizers of the 1940s, or simply looking for a better life. They grew yucca, walusa, citrus fruits, and bananas, which were mostly consumed for subsistence; coca was also produced in the region in those years but its trade was rather minimal due to the absence of a road network that would facilitate market access. With the Agrarian Reform of 1953 the colonization of Chapare became slightly more organized, the state promised technical and infrastructural assistance to the new colonizers (roads, clinics, schools), however that promise was never fulfilled (Spedding 2005) and colonization remained rather haphazard.

It should be noted here that despite their emphasis and rhetoric on indigenous rights the cocaleros themselves were not in fact indigenous to the Chapare. They were colonizers, and they had behaved as such towards the actual indigenous peoples of the region, the *Yuquis*, the *Sirionó* and the *Yuracaré*:

*"*There were the natives, as well as spontaneous colonization: [the towns of] Carmen, Totora, Ibuelo were already there, because after the war they [the colonizers] had already been located there, and in what is Chimoré here there was only a community of miners from Catavi[77], which came here in '47 or '57 I think, right? They were very happy when we arrived because finally they saw people like them, because they were fighting against the

[77] Catavi is a mine near the city of Llallagua in the province of Potosi. It used to belong to Bolivia's largest mine-owner and richest man, Simón Patiño and after the 1952 revolution was nationalized. It is known for two bloody massacres that occurred there to suppress miner's mobilizations, the first in 1942 and the second in 1967.

natives, the barbarians, now this ethnicity has been extinguished, the Sirionó[78], many cows died, they also killed barbarians [*barbaros* in the original text], every time they were taking, stealing and...very few were left; and ourselves, we were also afraid of the barbarians, but now they were living far away (...) they were afraid of the rifles because they had guns to defend themselves, we did not, but they were scared [because] they thought we also had rifles, but...that's how we began, no?[79]" , Julio Suzaño , ex-leader of the Chimoré Federation would narrate years later to Sandra Ramos Salazar (Ramos Salazar 2012,38). Andrew Canessa (2014:160) also confirms that in the 1950s and 1960s the residents of Cochabamba lived in fear of those 'savage', 'wild Indians', who were later displaced by Quechua and Aymara colonists. It is striking to note that the names of some of the main cities of the Chapare, such as Ivirgarzama, Eterazama, Padrezama, Isarzama, and Cesarzama are actually Yuracaré names: "Zama" in their language means "place where there is a river," and therefore Ivirgarzama is the place where there is a foamy river, while Cesarzama is the place of the green water river (Contreras 2013a). From the above it is clear that in the Chapare there was a conflict that also involved both definitions of indigeneity: both sides of the conflict, the colonizers and the *Sirionó* and the *Yuracaré* were indigenous peoples. The former belonged the indigenous aspect of Bolivia's cultures and nations: they were *Aymaras*, *Quechuas*, and *Guaranis* and were indigenous in relation to the territory that forms the Bolivian state. However, the latter were indigenous in relation to the region of the Chapare, as well in relation to the *Aymaras*, *Quechuas*, and *Guaranis*:

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[78] Interestingly enough, until the 1960s it was believed that the *Yuquis* were part of the *Sirionó* people. Therefore it is very probable that the *barbaros* Julio Suzaño is talking about here were actually *Yuquis*.

[79] Oikonomakis' translation from Spanish.

they had been there long before their arrival[80]. This is the reason why in this project the *Aymaras, Quechuas*, and *Guaranis* who went to the Chapare looking for a better future are referred to as *colonizers*, and not as *settlers*, which would seem more correct in the English language. When the colonizers would return to their places of origin they would recruit relatives and friends who joined them in the quest for a better life in the Tropics.

Between 1966 and 1969 a number of bridges were constructed over the main rivers (which until then were crossed with makeshift, or not so makeshift, zip-lines) and access to the main coca market of Villa Tunari slowly developed, allowing the cocaleros of Chapare to sell their coca leaves, which became their only viable means of survival. Due to the practical absence of the State in their region, in order to meet their needs Chapare's residents had to self-organize in an autonomous manner.

"…there was somebody from Llallagua...a certain Apolinar Martinez and there was also an ex-leader of the miners, they told us 'why don't we form a syndicate?' We need a school, a clinic, bridges, they have given us bridges made of burnt wood... we cannot live like that, there are no streets to carry our products, what are we going to do with the rice, you cannot eat 20 quintales (more or less 50kg) of rice, corn, yuca; so we founded it, we first created the Central of Chimoré on a small stream that is called "la poza", there is a big tree there, that's where we got together an ad-hoc committee first, and the Central later"

[interview of Julio Suzaño to Sandra Ramos Salazar (Ramos Salazar 2012, 41)].

[80] For a detailed analysis of the contradictions of indigeneity in Bolivia see Canessa (2014).

When a person would decide to move to the Chapare, they would first have to register themselves with the agricultural Union that became the highest authority in the region. The syndicate would then be responsible for allocating land in parcels (*chacos*)[81], resolving local disputes (robberies, land disputes etc.), and administering the coca commerce that was slowly emerging. In return, the newly affiliated members (*afiliados*) would have to pay the monthly participation fee of 5 pesos per month, participate in the communal works (opening of roads, construction of bridges over the rivers, etc.), as well as to pledge that they wouldn't treat their land as private property, but rather as communal. If a person were to decide to abandon their land, then their *chaco* would be transferred to somebody else after a payment of a relatively small amount to the outgoing owner. In addition, the syndicate would be responsible for providing social services to the community, such as health and education, since the state remained absent from the zone. The current Mayor of Villa Tunari, Feliciano Mamani (as of April 2014), a legendary *dirigente* of the cocalero movement, confirms that the *sindicato* was the highest - self-organized- authority in the region in those times, and that it would build schools, clinics, and roads through community work, while it would also assign *promotores* of education and health, responsible for providing those services[82]. Leonardo Marca, ex-cocalero community leader from Chipiriri narrates:

[81] Much later, in the 1970s, the syndicates would also register the *chacos* to the National Agrarian Reform Service (Servicio Nacional de Reforma Agraria) and provide its members with property titles (Spedding 2005).

[82] Personal interview with Feliciano Mamani, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis and Tomás Astelarra on 05-10-2013 in Villa Tunari, Chapare.

"We were abandoned. The compañeros had to sef-organize. You can't do anything individually, but when we are organized, yes we can. The organization was doing things better than the state. In the syndicate they opened up streets with their own hands, they made their own schools. In the assembly the condition of their own life was evaluated, there were 10 or 15 members in the Directorate of the syndicate, for example there's one Secretary of Health and it is [his] obligation to check whether there are sicknesses, whether there is any septic well, because sicknesses derive from that. Later on, from '86 onwards there were Health promoters..."

(Interview with Leonardo Marca, Chipiriri, 9 November 2013[83])

Later on, with the criminalization of coca and the entry of the State –and its army- into the region, the *sindicato* was also responsible for organizing the self-defence units of the *cocaleros*.

"*In any case, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the* sindicato *from its very beginning constituted the principal civil authority of the zone, practicing de-facto autonomy, in permanent confrontation with the military and police authorities that were implementing the decisions taken by the government in regards to the war against coca."* (Gutierrez Aguilar 2008: 190)[84]

[83] Conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis.

[84] Oikonomakis' translation from Spanish. The English version of the book is forthcoming, which will be published as *Rhythms of the Pachakuti: Indigenous Uprising and State Power in Bolivia*(Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014)

A number of *sindicatos* composed a *Central*, and a number of *Centrales* would form a Federation. According to a work published by Radio Kawsachun Coca in 2008 (Salazar Ortuño et al. 2008) the first Federation established in the Chapare was the Federación Especial de Colonizadores de Chimoré (F.E.C.CH.), founded in 1964. Today, the Federations that comprise the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba are the following:

a) Federación Especial de Trabajadores Campesinos del Trópico de Cochabamba (F.E.T.C.T.C. founded in 1975). Province: Chapare. It is comprised of: 31 centrales- 299 sindicatos-21.726 afiliados.

b) Federación Especial de Yungas Chapare (F.E.Y.CH, founded in 1988). Province: Chapare. It is comprised of: 6 centrales- 66 sindicatos- 2.646 afiliados.

c) Federación Unica de Centrales Unidas (F.U.C.U. founded in 1986). Province: Tirraque. It is comprised of: 8 centrales-57 sindicatos-2.071 afiliados.

d) Federación Especial de Colonizadores de Chimoré (F.E.C.CH. founded in 1964). Province: Tirraque. It is comprised of: 4 centrales-29 sindicatos-1.857 afiliados.

e) Federación Especial de Colonizadores de Carrasco Tropical (F.E.C.C.T founded in 1984). Province:Carrasco. It is comprised of: 28 centrales- 419 sindicatos-14.678 afiliados.

f) Federación Agraria Mamore Bulo Bulo (F.A.M.B.B. founded in 1996 and previously belonging to the Federation of Carrasco). Province: Carrasco. It is comprised of: no centrales-7 sindicatos-39 afiliados.

In total, the Six Federations count on 86 centrales, 935 sindicatos, and 45.539 afiliados (families). (Data generated from Salazar Ortuno et al. 2008, 19)

The *cocalero* women had always been engaged in the struggle, however they did so organically as well from 1995 onwards. They went on to found the following Women's Federations:

a) Federación de Mujeres Campesinas del Trópico de Cochabamba (FECAMTROP, founded in 1995).

b) Federación de Mujeres de Yungas Chapare (founded in 1995).

c) Federación de Mujeres de Centrales Unidas (founded in 1995).

d) Federación de Mujeres de Chimoré (founded in 1996).

e) Federación de Mujeres de Carrasco Tropical (founded in 1995).

f) Federación de Mujeres de Mamore (founded in 1996).

Naturally the Women's Federations also had their own coordinating body, the Coordinadora Campesina de Mujeres del Trópico de Cochabamba (COCAMTROP), which was also founded in 1995.

According to Spedding (2005) and Salazar Ortuno *et al*. (2008) the Six Federations of the Tropics were then united under the name *Federación Especial del Trópico de Cochabamba (*founded in 1991*)*, which in 2000 was renamed as the *Coordinadora de las Seis Federaciónes del Trópico de Cochabamba*, influenced by the success of the *Coordinadora por la Defensa del Agua y la Vida*, of the Cochabamba Water War (Spedding 2005: 297).

Self-organization and elections

While the Federations of Coca Producers had managed to undertake all the responsibilities of the absent Bolivian state, run all the day-to-day activities in the Chapare, and become a kind of local de facto autonomous government, it seems that as far as the

political formation of their members was concerned they did not do a very sophisticated job, at least until 1985. Filemón Escóbar, one of the founders of MAS and an ex-miner and Union leader, argues that when he came to the Chapare the *cocaleros* used to support one or other of the institutional parties[85]. Or, as Don Dario Mendoza confirmed in an interview conducted with him in Entre Rios:

"We used to vote for whoever would come and would offer us caps or flags and the people were politically lost, none of the compañeros knew how to talk, there were no community leaders..."[86]

Fernando Mayorga, professor at the *Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios* (CESU) of the University of San Simón of Cochabamba who was also involved with the initial political and ideological formation of the *cocalero* leaders suggests: "the *Chapareños* were not anti-imperialists ideologically, they became so when imperialism knocked on their door and came to find them"[87], referring to the violent US-conceived and led coca eradication programs implemented in the region from 1988 onwards. This author would argue that two developments contributed massively to the radicalization of the *cocalero* movement:

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[85] Personal interview with Filemón Escóbar, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 23-10-2013 in Cochabamba.

[86] Personal Interview with Dario Mendoza, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis and Tomás Astelarra on 29-09-2013 in Entre Rios, Chapare.

[87] Personal interview with Fernando Mayorga, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 17-09-2013 in Cochabamba.

a) The criminalization of coca production and the forceful eradication programs that followed it,

and

b) The massive arrival of miners from 1985 onwards, who brought with them their Union experience and militancy.

La ley mil ocho (1008)

The issue of coca is central to the process of change that Bolivia has been undergoing in the past two decades. In order to try to regulate coca production, the government of Victor Paz Estenssoro (MNR-Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario) ,under pressure from the U.S., approved Law 1008 (Ley del Régimen de la Coca y Sustancias Controladas**)** in 1988, which opened up a Pandora's box for the country's coca producers. Kathryn Ledebur argues that Law 1008 was a product of long-term pressure on behalf of the U.S. Embassy, which had connected its passage with the release of –until then withheld- economic assistance to Bolivia (Ledebur 2005, 151). According to Law 1008 the production of coca would be legal in the zones that the law defined as 'traditional' (where coca has been cultivated ever since the times of the Inca Empire) and 'illegal' outside those limits. The 'illegal' zones were now sub-divided into the '*zonas de producción excedentaria en transición*' (zones of surplus production in transition), where the cultivation of coca would be gradually replaced by other crops with the assistance of the state, and the '*zonas de production ilícita'* (zones of illicit production) where the coca bushes would be simply uprooted without any kind of compensation (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008).

Zones of coca production according to Law 1008

Legal	Where the coca leaf has traditionally been produced ever since the times of the Inca empire
Illegal *–Producción Excedentaria en transicion*	Coca leaf replaced by other crops with the assistance of the state (compensation, official assistance etc.)
Illegal- *Producción Ilícita*	Coca trees uprooted without any compensation

The Chapare was categorized as '*zona excedentaria',* while Yungas Vandiola, Yungas La Paz, and Apollo, as 'zonas tradicionales'. Here it is worth mentioning that the coca reduction programs did not begin in 1988, but rather in the early 1980s, under both military and civil governments. The military governments of the early '80s with their coca reduction policies were followed by the governments of Victor Paz Estenssoro (MNR-AND) with his *'Plan Trienal'* and his 'Law 1008'; that of Jaime Paz Zamora with his *'coca por desarollo'* and *'coca por agua'* proposals; the government of Gonzalez 'Goni' Sanchez de Lozada with his *'Coca Zero'* programs, and the bloody *"Plan Dignidad"* of Hugo Banzer and Javier Quiroga. As part of these policies, the Chapare became a militarized zone where the regular army, as well as special military/police forces, were deployed to forcefully uproot the coca trees of the *cocaleros*, under the supervision of the US government. Those special anti-drug units were the *Unidad Movil Para el Patrullaje Rural* (UMOPAR –locally known as the *leopardos*, due to the colour of their uniforms and the leopard badge on their arm), *the Unidad de Policia Ecologica* (UPE), and paramilitary groups, such as the *Fuerza de Tarea Expedicionaria* (FTE). The UMOPAR was created in 1983 and was funded, trained, and uniformed by the U.S., modelled on a similar force that bore the same name in Peru. The FTE on the other hand was commanded by Bolivians, but its rank and file was comprised of mercenaries, according to the Bolivian Ombudswoman of the time Ana Maria de

Campero (Ledebur 2005, 155). As a result, between 1980 and 2004, the *cocaleros* of the Chapare suffered heavy repression and marginalization: 206 of them –including 8 babies- were killed either by the army or the special antidrug and paramilitary forces, 519 were injured, 121 tortured, 447 were whipped (including children), and 4,134 were detained (Salazar Ortuño et al. 2008).

Year	**Deaths**	**Injuries**	**Tortures**	**Detentions**	**Rapes**
1980-1982	1	0	0	0	2
1982-1985	3	0	0	0	2
1985-1989	22	32	0	603	3
1989-1993	2	10	22	70	1
1993-1997	16	158	4	2184	3
1997-2001	23	132	23	955	2
2001-2002	13	50	60	128	0
2002-2003	12	51	12	158	0
2003-2004	3	13	0	36	0
Total	95	446	121	4134	13

Table :Combined data from Salazar Ortuño et al. (2008) [88]

[88] Sources according to the authors: People's Defensor, Ministry of Justice, Bolivian Military and Police Files, data compiled by researchers, and national press.

Other sources report smaller number of casualties and detentions, but do however confirm that repression did reach high levels in the Chapare especially from 1997 onwards:

Year	Coca grower fatalities	Coca growers injured	Coca growers detained	Police and army fatalities	Police and military injured
1997	5	65	135	2	6
1998	9	62	171	4	19
1999	0	0	82	0	0
2000	2	72	47	10	10
2001	7	193	88	0	5
2002	5	145	66	5	69
Jan-Aug. 2003	5	30	104	6	26
Total	**33**	**567**	**693**	**27**	**135**

Source: Chapare Human Rights Ombusdman's Office, January 2004 (Ledebur 2005)

The implementation of Bolivia's war on drugs was administered by the DEA, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. The *cocaleros*, in an effort to resist and defend their right to coca cultivation, deepened their political organization, created the Federations and the *Coordinadora*, and started a protest campaign that included marches, road blockades, and self-defence committees. However, the key to this radicalization of the *cocalero* movement was the arrival to the region of the '*mineros*', the ex-miners who had lost their jobs under the neoliberal policies the Bolivian governments started to implement from 1985 onwards, causing many of them to decide to move to the Chapare and become coca producers.

The Miners

In 1985, the Bolivian government was unable to service its debts and chose to implement neoliberal structural adjustment policies under the advice of Harvard professor Jeffrey Sachs, who came up with a plan to "save" the country's economy, the infamous 'Decree 21060'. In his book "The End of Poverty"(2005) Jeffrey Sachs, after admitting that when he was invited to assist Bolivia get out of its crisis he didn't even know where it was located on the map, argues that due to the collapse of the tin cartel that Bolivia was part of and the inability to hold prices at previous levels, from 1985 onwards the country had to take sharp measures:

"First, the October 1985 collapse of tin prices was eating away at the budget and macroeconomic stability. The tin mines were no longer profitable. The mining sector was throwing the entire budget into a huge deficit. The Bolivians undertook a massive cutback on the tin-mining labor force, one that was shocking in scale and heartrending for those affected. Almost five sixths of the tin workers eventually lost their jobs. An era of large-scale tin mining in Bolivia had ended with the collapse of the tin cartel. (Sachs 2005, 99)"

It is very interesting to note here that, ironically enough, it was the very same president who had previously nationalized the mines that would now reverse many of the decrees he himself had introduced back in 1952, including the closure of the previously nationalized mines and the imposition of a farmers' tax (Nash 1993). According to the decree 21060, Bolivia had to (neo) liberalize its international trade by removing any protectionist trade restrictions in place, freezing wages, and massively 'reducing' the public sector, by firing large numbers of public employees (Dangl 2007). As a result, between 22,000 (Hesketh and Morton 2014:158) and 27,000 (de la Torre 2013, 177) miners who worked in the nationalized mines (a product of the Revolution of 1952), became unemployed and had to look for an alternative livelihood elsewhere. Many of them -it is Bolivian Left not clear yet exactly how many- moved to the Chapare, sometimes whole Unions, to grow coca (Grisaffi 2010; Albro 2005; Dangl 2007; Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008; Spedding 2005). The reasons why they chose the Chapare and coca production are simple; one of the main markets for the coca leaf in Bolivia (if one excludes the cocaine market) has traditionally been the mines. In order to be able to work under the extreme conditions and temperatures of the mine, without sufficient oxygen, the miners consumed coca leaves. The *cocaleros* and the miners were so intertwined that at times the annual price of coca leaves was directly dependent on the price of gold or silver. Therefore, the miners knew that coca was a profitable crop and some of them already had family members in the Chapare, a fact that made relocation a less risky business. They also knew that a big share of the country's coca leaf production was destined for the cocaine industry, since Bolivia was and still is the third coca producer worldwide behind only Peru and Colombia (Grisaffi 2014; Farthing and Kohl 2010). The miners received the unoccupied –more distant- lands of the Chapare, while some of them occupied whole regions. Those miners

brought with them the union tradition of their sector, one of the strongest in Bolivia since the Revolution of 1952, and were known for their militancy and activist experience, including leading the resistance against successive military dictatorships. In an interview with ex-miner and veteran of the *cocalero* movement, Dario Mendoza, he related that his Federation –now called Mamore/Bulo Bulo- had so many miners who had seen their comrades being killed and repressed, that when looking for a name for the Federation the second most popular proposal was that of '*Sangre Minero*', Miner's Blood[89]. And of course these ex-miners carried a strong determination not to lose their livelihood for a second time. They helped politicize and radicalize the region's *cocaleros*, according to accounts provided by Feliciano Mamani, Dario Mendoza, and Filemón Escóbar[90], the first two of them miners who moved to the Chapare from 1985 onwards, and the latter an ex-miner who became Evo Morales' advisor around more or less the same period. Dario Mendoza recalls that the *cocaleros* were less politicized and less militant, while the miners preferred direct action and also possessed guns and dynamite, which they would not hesitate to use. Gradually the *cocaleros* started looking for ways to react to state violence. At first they tried making demands on the state to stop violence and proposals (including proposals to reduce the amount of coca leaves produced in their *chacos*), often through protests that were met with bloody repression. Later on they established self-defence units that used wooden clubs, slingshots and dynamite against the army and the special antidrug forces. Álvaro Garcia Linera, the country's current vice-president and member of the EGKT at that time, argued in a televised interview he gave years later on Bolivian television together with Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar, that the EGTK was also involved in the formation of the *cocalero* self-defence units, without, however, further elaborating on that point (Linera and Gutiérrez Aguilar 1999). According to Feliciano Mamani and Dario Mendoza they even considered engaging in a guerrilla war. In 1995 Evo Morales had threatened that the Chapare would become a new Chiapas in the heart of Latin America (Petras and Veltmeyer 2011:104). However, the idea that prevailed was the one advocated by Trotskyist ex-miner

[89] Personal Interview with Dario Mendoza, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis and Tomás Astelarra on 29-09-2013 in Entre Rios, Chapare.

[90] Personal interviews.

Filemón Escóbar who became Morales' personal advisor. He organized more than 600 workshops in the Chapare in order to "educate" the *cocaleros* about what he believed was the correct road: the formation of a political party and the participation in the local and national elections[91].

Taking advantage of the 1994 Law of Popular Participation (Kohl 2003), whcih gave extended budgetary and planning powers to Bolivia's local municipalities (20% of the national budget rather than 10%), in 1995 the *cocalero* movement went on to co-found a political instrument (Instrumento Politicio por la Soberania de los Pueblos-IPSP) that would later become today's MAS. As Moira Zuazo (2009, 38) emphasizes, the decision to create a *political instrument* and not a party is related to the crisis of legitimacy of the *party* as an organisational form in those times, which was perceived as controlled "by the elite" (Stefanoni 2003, cited in Postero 2010, 20).

The IPSP slowly started taking over the Bolivian state structure, starting from local administration, to such a degree that eventually "…mayors, *corregidores* and sub-prefects [were] de facto subordinated to peasant confederations" as Álvaro García Linera[92], the country's Vice President, confirms (García Linera 2006).

However, it should be noted that the MAS did not begin as a project of the Six Federations of the Chapare alone. It was first conceived as the political instrument of the indigenous-campesino[93] movement of Bolivia and its creation was approved in the Sixth Congress of the CSUTCB (Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia- United Union Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia) in 1994. A year later at the "Land, Territory and Political Instrument" Congress that took place –ironically enough-

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[91] Personal interview with Filemón Escóbar, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis in Cochabamba, Bolivia, on 23 October 2013.

[92] It is interesting to note that Álvaro García Linera was a member of the revolutionary movement Ejercito Guerillero Tupac Katari (EGTK), was imprisoned for his participation in it, and that after his release he went on to become a prominent academic and -later on- the Vice-president of Bolivia.

[93] For a detailed analysis of the Bolivian indigenous-campesino movements see Postero (2010).

in Santa Cruz[94], the CSUTCB, the Federation of Peasant Women of Bolivia Bartolina Sisa (FNMCB-BS), the Syndical Confederation of Bolivian Colonizers (CSCB), and the Indigenous Central of the Bolivian East (CIDOB) established the Asamblea de los Pueblos (ASP) that would later become the MAS-ISP. After the elevation of Evo Morales to the leadership of the Six Federations in 1996, the *cocalero* movement would fight for the leadership of that political instrument for which until then there were three candidates: Alejo Véliz Lazo, a Quechua ex-secretary general of the CSUTCB and first leader of the ASP; Felipe Quispe, the *Mallku* leader of the Aymaras of the Altiplano; and Evo Morales, the leader of the *cocaleros* of the Chapare. Thanks to the latter's electoral success in the municipal and national elections of 1995 and 1997[95], Evo Morales and the *cocaleros* of the Chapare managed to win the internal battle for the leadership and the control of the MAS-ISP.

The Water, Coca, and Gas Wars (2000-2005)

With their political instrument in place the *cocaleros* of the Chapare started taking over local government positions and even parliamentary seats from 1997 onwards (Mayorga 2007). As Raquel Gutierrez demonstrates in her book *Los Ritmos del Pachakuti* (2008), during Bolivia's "turbulent years" 2000-2005 (Oikonomakis and Espinoza 2014) MAS became one of the three main opponents to the state socio-political strategies in a process that began with the Cochabamba Water War of 2000 and ended with the election of Evo Morales as President in 2005. During that period the country experienced several serious social conflicts that had as their epicentre the exploitation of its natural resources; water, gas, and of course the coca leaf. The first rupture with the Bolivian governments' neoliberal policies came in 2000 with the Water War, which overturned the sale of

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[94] Stronghold of Bolivian elites.

[95] In the municipal elections of 1995 the ASP (under the banner of the Izquierda Unida- IU) managed to elect 10 Mayors and 49 local councilors in Chapare, and in the national elections of 1997 it managed to obtain 16.5% of the vote in Cochabamba and elect four deputies, even though nationally the IU did not manage to obtain more than 3.7% of the vote. Needless to say that one of the deputies elected was Evo Morales Ayma, with 70% of the votes in Chapare and Carrasco, the highest percentage in that year's Congress. Felipe Quispe was still in jail for his participation in the EGTK.

Cochabamba's municipal water system SEMAPA to Aguas del Tunari, a consortium of multinationals in which Italian company Edison SpA and American Bechtel controlled the majority of the shares. Two years later it was the turn of the so-called Coca War[96], which intensified in January-February 2002 due to the government's decision to prohibit the production, sale, and transportation of the coca leaf and the closure of its main markets, particularly that in Sacaba (a town very close to Cochabamba).

Low-Intensity war

As it has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, ever since the approval of Law 1008 in 1988, Chapare and its residents have been involved in a long-term low intensity conflict with the Bolivian state. *Cocalero* community leaders would often become targets of that conflict and it was not uncommon for many of them to be tortured, shot, or "to be made disappear". The police and the army also made very regular visits to their houses, every time there was an escalation of the conflict. Leonardo Marca from Chipiriri reccaled that once he had to hide in the cemetery near his house in order to avoid arrest by the soldiers who came to search his house at night and terrorize his family looking for him[97], an action that is still remembered to date in the Chapare. This conflict would climax at times, like it happened on 27 June 1988 when the *cocalero* movement took part in its first battle against the UMOPAR, a battle that ended with more than a dozen *cocaleros* (18-19 according to Leonilda Zurita[98] Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008, 182) being killed and more than 100 injured in the event that became known as the *Massacre of Villa Tunari*. From 1998 onwards, however, the government of Hugo Bánzer came up with the "*Plan Dignidad*", which promised the complete eradication of both the illegal and the exceeding coca plantations (including those of the Chapare) and the promotion of alternative

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[96] See Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008.

[97] Personal interview with Leonardo Marca, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 09-11-2013 in Chipiriri.

[98] 12 according to the Human Right's Ombudsman, mostly caused by victims jumping into the river. [The author would like to thank Thomas Grisaffi for this observation.]

development -and crops- instead (ibid, 200). From 1998 the police and military forces stationed in the Chapare were doubled, tanks were even transferred to the area, while the *cocaleros* started living under a state of government-imposed terror. All this evolved into the Coca War of January-February 2002. A month earlier, on 27 November 2001, the government of Jorge Quiroga approved the Decree 26415, which prohibited the gathering, transportation, and sale of coca leaves from the illegal zones to the primary markets[99]. The punishment for disobeying this law was imprisonment of between 8 and 12 years. Meanwhile in a deadly conflict –which during the times of "state terror" was not a rare phenomenon in the Chapare- a few days later the President of one of the Six Federations, Casimiro Huanca, was assassinated by the army under unclear circumstances in Chimoré, on 6 December 2001.

With the New Year the cocaleros decided to go on the counterattack. On 14 January 2002 they began a long mobilization that would last for almost a month and would include marches, road blockades, and clashes with the police and the army, as well as the expulsion of Evo Morales from the Bolivian parliament and the arrest of the main cocalero leaders: a mobilization that would become known as the Coca War. The Coca War had four main demands: the abolition of Decree 26415, the investigation and clarification of the assassination of Casimiro Huanca, the suspension of the forceful eradication of coca, and the extradition of the ex-President and military dictator Hugo Bánzer to Argentina for his role in the Argentinean dictatorship and the *"Plan Condor"*. Later on, one additional demand would be added: the re-admittance of Evo Morales to the Bolivian Parliament. On the second day of the Coca War (15 January 2002), the *cocaleros* occupied the Sacaba market and even exploded one of its walls using dynamite, also burning a few nearby vehicles. The clashes continued for three more days and soon became deadly: 4 cocaleros and 2 soldiers are killed, while more than 70 people were reported injured. On 19 January 2001, however, police and army units invaded the headquarters of the Six Federations in the city of Cochabamba, located on *Plazuela* Bush, and arrested a number of *cocalero*

[99] The two biggest "primary markets" of Bolivia are the one of Villa Fátima for La Paz, and the one of Sacaba for Cochabamba.

leaders. Feliciano Mamani, the current Mayor of Villa Tunari who was amongst them, recalls:

"We were having a meeting in Cochabamba and they entered armed, they were very well prepared, contracted by the [American] Embassy; they were not even policemen, they were paramilitaries but they had military uniforms. Nos han sacado la mierda! *It was Sunday and there was no Justice, but they sent us to jail. They tortured us, burnt the hands of some of us, our faces [looked] like onions, we were urinating blood...*[100]*"*

Two days later, on January 21, 2002 Evo Morales was accused of being the "intellectual author" of the events and was expelled from the Parliament within a record-48 hours - according to the Constitution the accused MP should have had five days available to present his defence, and at least 17 until the final expulsion. However, while the Bolivian party system almost unanimously voted in favour of the expulsion of its most voted member (around 70% of the total vote in his region), the Bolivian movements that had by that time been mobilizing for two years stood in his defence. Both the *Coordinadora por la Defensa del Agua y la Vida* and Felipe "*El Mallku*" Quispe Huanca, on behalf of the CSUTCB expressed their solidarity with the *cocalero* (and Evo's) struggle and in the coming days a number of road blockades and marches took place all over the country. Finally, on 9 February 2002, the government was defeated: it had to reach an agreement with the *cocaleros,* accepting almost all of their demands. The application of Decree 26415 was suspended, the imprisoned *cocaleros* were liberated, and the families of the dead were promised compensation. However, Evo Morales' expulsion was not reversed[101].

In 2003 Bolivia experienced the events of 'Red October', a massive nation-wide mobilization triggered by the government's plans to export the country's natural gas to the U.S. through Chile, which evolved into a demand for the nationalization of the

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[100] Interview with Feliciano Mamani, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis and Tomas Astelarra in Villa Tunari, Chapare, Bolivia, on 5 October 2013

[101] For an excellent chronlogy of the Coca War, see Gutiérrez Aguilar (2008, 203–206).

country's natural resources that had been hitherto exploited by several multinationals[102]. Two years later Bolivia's social movements fought the Second Water War against the privatization of water in El Alto, and a second Gas War for the nationalization of gas and the natural resources of the country in general. During those five turbulent years the main protagonists were the autonomous self-organized indigenous peoples, trade unions like the COB (*Central Obrera Boliviana* –Bolivian Working Central) and the CSUTCB (*Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia*- Unique Syndicate Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia), neighbourhood assemblies like the FEJUVE (*Federación de Juntas Vecinales de El Alto* – Federation of El Alto Neighborhood Councils) and social movements like the *cocaleros* of the Chapare and Yungas La Paz. The party model was certainly not the principal organizational structure that fuelled this upheaval. The struggle led to the forced resignation of two presidents and the privatization of natural resources such as water and gas was overturned. Throughout this process, the representativity and the legitimacy of the country's political parties was questioned, as was the efficiency of the neoliberal economic policies the country's successive governments had been implementing since 1985. As a counterbalance to those critiques two main proposals were developed according to Fernando Mayorga (Mayorga 2012): that of participatory democracy –direct or communitarian- when it comes to politics, and that of state economic nationalism as far as economic policy is concerned. Instances of horizontal direct-democracy forms of organization appeared in Cochabamba, where the Water War was coordinated by the *Coordinadora* that would assemble in the main square of the city, and where spokespersons of the different neighbourhood assemblies would gather to discuss their strategy and future plans. Similar processes were experienced in El Alto, where the Water War and the Gas Wars where coordinated in the squares of *La Ceja*[103] and other neighbourhoods of El Alto under the communitarian organizational form of the *ayllu*.

[102] See Dangl (2007) , Webber (2012), and Zibechi (2010) for a more detailed description of the events.

[103] La Ceja (the eybrow) is one of the most important zones of El Alto, "heart" of its social movement activity during the Gas and Water wars.

If we accept Lenin's and Trotsky's theory that dual power is a condition that appears in revolutionary epochs when a "constituent power" challenges the authority of the "constituted" one, then we must notice that in the Bolivian case that dual power took three different forms that were simultaneously antagonistic to the state and to each other, competing for the revolutionary hegemony of the Bolivian "constituent power" of the time. Without a doubt, the most horizontal and directly democratic of those forms was that of the *Coordinadora por la Defensa del Agua y la Vida* (hereforth: Coordinadora) of Cochabamba, which in the words of one of its spokespersons Oscar Olivera (in *La MAScarada Del Poder,* 2012: 85) was "a self-organized autonomous instance made up of urban and rural people that resisted to and reversed the privatization of water in Cochabamba.[104]" That horizontal experience of self-organization from below, in which Evo Morales and García Linera played a rather peripheral role (ibid.) and in which a big share of the population of Cochabamba participated directly through popular assemblies, became one of the main tangible critiques of the inadequacy of Bolivia's representative political system, and prefigured a possible way forward: an horizontal, direct-democratic, participatory way of decision making, which in turn demanded the *socialization* (through social management and common ownership) of formerly public-newly privatized enterprises, and the formation of autonomous municipalities (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008, 51). The other political proposal developed during those turbulent years was that of the revolutionary *indigenismo* of Felipe Quispe, which had a more exclusionary character as it focused mostly on the indigenous question and itself evolved into a political party taking the electoral road to social change, achieving little success. The third proposal was that of Evo Morales, his *cocaleros*, and the MAS. However, while it did have a strong and militant support base in the Chapare, it still needed to reach out to the rest of the country, something it managed to achieve through a strategy of coalition building with other organizations, as we shall see.

[104] Oikonomakis' translation from Spanish.

From the "rainy place" to the "Burned Palace"[105]

Having decided to take the "electoral road" to social change, and having already formed their political instrument, the *cocaleros* of the Chapare now had to learn how to walk that road. During a conversation with Tom Grisaffi, an anthropologist who has spent more than 3 years in the Chapare, he narrated that once one of the *cocalero* community leaders gave him the following metaphor to describe the reasons why they had decided to form a political instrument:

"There was a football game going on between two different teams, and we were always in the stands cheering for one or another team. Until one day we decided to form our own team and play the game ourselves."

However, in order to play the game you first need to learn its rules. And afterwards you need to climb up the different league categories until you make it to the National League. And of course, you have to start from your local league: from *el Chapare*.

In the Chapare the *cocaleros* had a very strong support base at union level. What was missing was to translate that support into votes in the local and national elections, and to start taking over the state apparatus. Filemón Escóbar (Escóbar 2008, 260) describes how the candidates of MAS were selected in the Chapare, in the assemblyist, communitarian, and syndicalist tradition of the area:

"Who would be the best candidate for Mayor, counsellor, deputy, senator, or president or vice-president was discussed in the assembly. In every case the assembly would receive names; and those names would be discussed openly. The one winning the vote would be the candidate. To this point there's no novelty. The novelty is that all the affiliated members present in the syndicalist assembly would later vote for the selected candidate. All those [others] can have televisions or radios or both of these so-called modern forms of propaganda, can do a very nice propaganda against the selected candidates of the

[105] The Presidential Palace of Bolivia is known as *Palacio Quemado* ("Burned Palace"), due to a fire that almost burnt it to ashes after an uprising in 1875.

syndicalist or communitarian assembly of the ayllu, [but] the response of both assemblies is that they would vote for the ones that the syndicate or communitarian assemblies had decided upon. No other force, or propaganda, could change the decision that had been taken."

And so, the *cocalero* movement started occupying the first local Mayorships and counsellor positions in the Chapare, for the first time in the 1995 local elections under the banner of Izquierda Unida, and subsequently in the 1997 National Elections where they managed to get 3% of the national vote and almost 17% of the local one in the Chapare, electing their leader Evo Morales as the most voted MP in the country (70% of the votes in his region).

With the absolute disregard shown by the country's traditional political parties during the 2000-2005 cycle of protest, and with the power void that had been created in Bolivia's political system, the *cocaleros* could not fail to notice the opportunity that would take them from the Tropics of Cochabamba to the "Burned Palace" of the Plaza Murillo in La Paz. However, for that to happen the party would have to expand both organizationally and geographically. However, at least until the 2002 electoral success, the necessary resources were scarce and the "scale-shift"(Tarrow and McAdam 2003) seemed very distant.

A network of alliances, Evo's expulsion, and an unexpected "ally"

The MAS was born as an alliance. An alliance of the different wings of the indigenous-campesino[106] movement of Bolivia that had decided in 1995, ironically enough in the right-wing stronghold of Santa Cruz, to create its political instrument. The biggest and most important *campesino* federation of the country, the CSUTCB, was present at this meeting, as were the *Bartolinas* (FNMCB- Bartolina Sisa), while the Colonizer's Confederation (CSBC) and the Indigenous Federation of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB) were also part of the project. Here it should be noted that the aforementioned Unions were mostly

[106] For a detailed discussion of the Bolivian indigenous-campesino movment see Postero (2010).

focused on ethnic and cultural demands, such as the recognition of indigenous cultures, collective ownership of indigenous land, identity politics etc., and did not make particular class-based demands, as the COB for example had done in the past. Therefore it was not difficult to fit within the *cocaleros*' anti-neoliberal and indigenous cultural rhetoric that had as its symbol the coca leaf and the *whipala*. Of course the coca leaf was also part of a sectoral demand, that of the *cocaleros*, but at the same time it bore an indigenous symbolism with which the Bolivian indigenous peasants could easily identify.

Having secured the support of the indigenous-*campesino* movement of the country, the ASP now had to form another alliance, this time with the leftist party Izquierda Unida, in order to participate in the 1995 local and in the 1997 national elections. It's success –especially in the latter- was huge, however, mostly in the Cochabamba region where they secured 16.5% (3.7% nation-wide) of the vote and elected four deputies, including Evo Morales who became the most voted deputy in the country. That electoral success undoubtedly persuaded the *cocaleros* of the route they had chosen to follow and at the same time put the ASP, that would later become MAS borrowing its name from another smaller party, on the agenda of the Bolivian political system. However, what would make Morales' and the MAS's popularity skyrocket were two events over which the MAS had no control, but did, however, exploit politically in a very effective manner: Evo's expulsion from the parliament after the Coca War, and his rivalry with the then U.S. ambassador in Bolivia, Manuel Rocha.

In January 2002, and during the Coca War that was on-going in the Chapare Evo Morales was expelled from the Parliament with the accusation of being the "intellectual author" of the bloody conflict. That fact, in the turbulent times Bolivia was going through at the time, was perceived as the expulsion of an indigenous *cocalero* leader, who also happened to be the most voted deputy in the Parliament, orchestrated by the old political elites, because of the fact that he was indigenous and was fighting for an indigenous cause

from within the Parliament. That fact gave Morales an incredible popularity boost as well as a certain prestige amongst the Bolivian left[107].

In the meantime, the MASistas had to solve an even greater problem. Up to that point their political instrument had got off to a great start, putting itself on the Bolivian political agenda, however, its electoral success was only restricted to the local level, in the Chapare, where they had a strong organic presence anyway. However, their ambitions, especially in a situation when the traditional political parties in Bolivia were completely disregarded, were taking them much further than that and the main question they had to answer was how to expand organizationally and geographically in order to run for the Presidency? They had a strong base in the Chapare, but they lacked both the resources and the physical and political presence to have an impact in other regions of the country. As a result they turned to the strategy of alliance-building.

"The agreement consisted, broadly speaking, of the following: on a vague electoral platform, discursively anti-neoliberal, centred on defence of the coca and the acceptance of the candidature of Evo Morales for the Presidency of the Republic, the MAS was offering its platform for the local organization with which it would form an alliance to register its candidate; without the party interfering too much in that selection, which was subject to local decision and very diverse, according to the region. Once the agreement was formalized and the local candidates nominated –as deputies mainly- the MAS included them in its list and agreed a campaign visit of Evo Morales in the community or region, whose planning and expenses were the responsibility of the local organizations…In this way, the MAS could secure the realization of a national electoral campaign which cost very little resources from the party structure…becoming involved together with the population in the direct participation of the organization of the events of electoral proselytism." (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008, 212- Oikonomakis' translation from Spanish)

In addition, the MAS started inviting leftist urban intellectuals of certain prestige, indigenous or not, to participate in its electoral list, with the intellectuals always under the

[107] Personal interview with Julio Llanos Rojas, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 09-09-2013 in La Paz.

leadership of the indigenous *campesinos*, as the Morales - Garcia Linera duo demonstrates. The symbolic dimension is obvious: for the first time in Bolivian history it is the urban, middle-class, white intellectuals that are led by the *campesino*, working-class, indigenous, and not the other way round. The intellectuals were directly invited by the MAS leadership and their candidateship was not decided in the assemblies, a fact that created –and still does- tensions within the MAS grassroots. Anria (2013, 32) argues that in certain cases, in order to win the support of local organizations the MAS would have to turn to the strategy of *pegas*: the promise of a position in the government in the case of an electoral win, a strategy that Anria describes as "top-down co-optation".

During the electoral campaign of 2002, Evo and his MAS would find an unexpected "ally" in the person of the –then- U.S. ambassador in Bolivia, Manuel Rocha. In a speech that was televised and widely broadcasted by the national television, he more or less described the *cocaleros* and Evo as equivalent to the Taliban, and indirectly warned the Bolivian people not to vote in favour of a person that was not favoured by the U.S. government. That was it. Evo's popularity increased by 4% immediately afterwards and from that moment onwards, in a joking manner, Evo started calling ambassador Rocha "the chief of his electoral campaign". In another very famous incident, during a televised discussion among that year's Presidential candidates, which took place in the luxurious Radisson hotel in La Paz, Evo decided to take part without being invited. He was not allowed in, and once again the indigenous *cocalero* was "excluded" and discriminated against by the country's political elites, which made his popularity skyrocket once again.

"What I want is to have a debate with ambassador Rocha. I prefer to discuss with the owner of the circus, not with the clowns," he said (Astelarra 2014).

The rest, as they say, is history. In the elections of 2002, the largely indigenous, heterogeneous coalition of MAS came from out of nowhere to take second place in the national elections, only 2% behind the winner, the MNR of Goni Sanchez de Lozada. With the dynamics it generated, and with the continuation of the same coalition building strategy, the continuing disregard of the Bolivian traditional parties after the Water and Gas Wars that followed, and the significantly increased media presence and revenues it

could now receive from the state budget, three years later the MAS won the national elections with an impressive 53,74% of the vote, and Evo Morales Ayma became the first indigenous President of Bolivia. The same scenario would be repeated in the 2009 General elections, with Evo Morales winning a 64.22% of the vote this time. The political strategy of participating in the electoral process adopted more than 15 years ago by the *cocalero* movement of the Chapare was triumphant.

CHAPTER VII

Between the armed struggle and the elections.

CHAPTER VII

BETWEEN THE ARMED STRUGGLE AND THE ELECTIONS

An ideal place for rebellion

"*Compañeros*, are you inclined towards a rebellion?' I was asking during the seminars… 'Yeeees! Armed struggle!' Evo was shouting…"[108]

…recalls Filemón Escóbar, the principal advisor and political educator of Evo Morales and the Six Federations of the Chapare. He also adds that the Chapare was an ideal place for a *guerrilla*, due to its dense vegetation and its isolation from the rest of the country in every possible way: political, geographical, or economic. However Don Filemón, *el viejo Filippo* of the Bolivian left, did not share Evo's enthusiasm:

"No, I explained to him. Ours, is a political struggle for the coca leaf, to participate in the elections with our own candidates…"

El Chapare was already heavily militarized and the *cocaleros* were being treated like drug-traffickers. Their leaders were being imprisoned, tortured, assassinated or made disappear. Their relative autonomy had been violated by the Bolivian armed forces and

[108] Personal interview with Filemón Escóbar, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 23-10-2013 in Cochabamba.

their protests did not bear any fruits. At the same time, the region had become a preferable destination for many ex-miners and their families, victims of the closure of the state tin mines, who had a lot of militant experience, knew how to use dynamite, and were trained in making booby traps (*caza bobos*) "...including the women," adds Don Filemón. In such a situation, becoming a *guerrilla* would have been the obvious choice, the last resort, the only "way out" as Goodwin would put it (2001). Particularly after the enormous resonance of the Zapatista movement that appeared more or less at the same time, a movement that the *cocaleros* knew and admired, as several veteran *cocalero* leaders confirmed during the fieldwork for this thesis, one would expect that armed struggle would be the path they would have chosen to follow. After all, Evo Morales himself had even threatened publicly that the Chapare was very close to becoming a new Chiapas in an interview he gave to Martín Sivak in 1995 (Astelarra 2014).

Why and how did the *cocaleros* of the Chapare –against all academic odds- decide to opt for the "electoral route" to social change instead? And why did they not opt for it at first place? Why did they prefer to self-organize autonomously from the state when they first started arriving in the Chapare in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s?

In the relevant literature, surprisingly little has been written regarding the mechanisms that lead a movement to choose one or another road to social change, whether that is through elections, armed struggle, or autonomy from the state. When it comes to Latin American contemporary social movements - indigenous or not- the focus in the relevant literature has been placed on *when*, *where*, and *why* movements emerge, but not on what happens after that: *how* and *through what mechanisms* they choose their political strategies towards the state on their way to social change. Deborah Yashar and Eduardo Silva, for example (Yashar 2005a; Silva 2009), have produced two significant studies on social movement mobilization in Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, and Venezuela in which they argue that the convergence of three conditions accounts for the emergence of social movements in the aforementioned countries and not in others: a) the introduction

of neoliberal policies that disrupted pre-established local autonomies; b) the presence of political associational space; and c) the presence of trans-community networks. They also notice that in all these cases, the movements took a rather reformist character, focusing on electoral processes instead of armed insurrection. It must be said that theirs is an excellent contribution to the literature.

However, they do not explain how that happened and through what mechanisms those movements chose to opt for one political strategy and not for another. In the case of the *cocaleros* of the Chapare in particular, despite the vast literature that has been produced lately on Bolivia (Dangl 2007; Dangl 2010; Kohl 2010; Petras and Veltmeyer 2005; J. R. Webber 2010; Zibechi 2010; J. R. Webber 2012), most of it is focused on the MAS as a party, making very little reference to its mother movement, the Six Federations of the Chapare. A few notable exceptions have placed some more emphasis on the Chapare itself (Grisaffi 2010, 2013; Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008), investigating, however, other dimensions of the movement there and certainly not focusing on the political strategies of the *cocaleros* and how they were determined.

This work aspires to fill both these gaps, the theoretical one and the case-specific one, going beyond the question of when and why movements emerge, and instead focusing on what they choose to do after that and the mechanisms through which that choice is made.

De facto Autonomy

As we have seen in the previous chapter, when the first colonizers arrived in the Chapare they had to face several serious difficulties: the adverse geographical conditions, the (justified) hostility of the indigenous peoples of the region whom they displaced by force, and the lack of any kind of basic social service provision. At the same time, due to the absence of the Bolivian state –since practically the colonizers themselves were the *apostles* of the state in the Chapare- from the region, there was no pre-established institution that could deal with these issues. Therefore, the colonizers of the Chapare, who would later become coca producers, out of necessity had to create their own de-facto autonomous institutions in order to meet their basic needs in a self-organized manner.

And the institutions they created were modelled on the organizational form they were already familiar with: the *sindicato* (union).

Traditionally, and at least up until the late ‘90s, the spearhead of the Bolivian left had been the silver, gold, and –later- tin-miners. Even though they were the ones producing the highest share of the country’s wealth, they themselves have always been an exploited class by the oligarchs –such as the *rosca*- who controlled that wealth. From as early as 1930s, however, the Bolivian miners started forming the first unions (*sindicatos*), which then formed federations and confederations, and the *sindicato* became “the main form of political and economic resistance” (Postero 2010, 20). The *sindicatos mineros* played a very important and powerful role in the revolution of 1952 and the *union* became the preferred form of social organization for the Bolivian popular movements in contrast to the *party*, which was seen as controlled by the elites (Stefanoni, 2003 cited in Postero 2010). With the agrarian reform that followed the revolution, the first agrarian unions also started to appear in the Bolivian countryside, a process encouraged by the Bolivian State in an effort to replace the former landowning power structures with new ones. Financed and controlled from above, easy to co-opt and manipulate, these agrarian unions became the main, and sometimes the only, contact channel between the state and the peasantry. In this way, argue Hesketh and Morton (2014, 157), the state sought to control and limit the radical activism of the indigenous peasantry and direct it into “a state-led transformative project”. However, especially in the case of unions that were distant from the central political power and planning, as is the case of the Chapare, this state-led project gave birth to significant autonomous or semi-autonomous processes (ibid.).

The *sindicatos* of the Chapare –as in the rest of the country- had a rather centralized structure and a predominantly male leadership (Farthing and Kohl 2010), up until 1995 at least, when the first female *cocalero* unions were formed, in a process that seems closely related to the political project the *cocaleros* had just initiated. The *sindicato* immediately undertook what would have been the responsibilities of the –absent- Bolivian

state in the area. It was responsible for the land allocation and -ever since the 1970s- became the official channel between the state and the local populations by becoming responsible for the registration of land parcels with the National Agrarian Reform Service. It was also responsible for tax collection, organizing the collective works, dispute resolution, as well as for setting the transport fees. These functions are still being performed by the Chapare *sindicatos* to this day (Grisaffi 2013).

The *sindicatos* hold regular, as well as extraordinary meetings, at which at least one member from every affiliated household has to be present. In the case of an absence, a fine is imposed and in the case of multiple absences there are even more serious sanctions that can extend to the removal of a family's land (ibid.). As Thomas Grisaffi (2013) describes in detail, common decisions are taken in the assembly and to make sure that nobody leaves the room before a decision is taken, sometimes the door is locked from inside. There is a preference for consensual decisions, however, when it is difficult to reach a consensus the *cocaleros* vote in a non-secret manner, either by raising hands or by lining up behind the candidate whose proposal they support (the *fila* system). However, the consensus logic of the *sindicato* should not be overstated, according to Grisaffi, since it is not rare for there to be an 'enforced conformity' to the status quo for the fear of sanctions in case of disagreement. During fieldwork in the Chapare accounts were heard of *cocaleros* being threatened in cases where they disagreed with the leadership and the party line. In the Chapare, this kind of intimidation and the authoritarian power relations between the *sindicato*, the party, and the support bases is known as *dictadura sindical*.

Therefore, the *colonizadores* of the Chapare -who would soon become *cocaleros*- decided to organize themselves under the umbrella of the *sindicato* since this was the organizational form that some of them knew first-hand from their mining militancy, and which others had come to know from the role the *sindicatos* played during the revolution of 1952, as well as from the promotion of the *sindicato* as an organizational form by the government thereafter. In addition, the *sindicato* in the Chapare was considered as an

organizational form created bythe grassroots and from below unlike the party, which was seen as a tool of the elites. While the *sindicato* became the local community decision-making body, the *central* became the municipality, the *federación* became the region, and the *Coordinadora* of the Six Federations "the government within the state".

Coordinadora	Government-within-the-state level
Federación	Regional level
Central	Municipal level
Sindicato	Community level

Table: The organizational structure of the Six Federations of the Tropics

This form of local governance maintained its relative autonomy from the Bolivian state, and its only relation with it remained the registration of the *chacos* with the official authorities, which –in return- further legitimized the *sindicato* in the eyes of the locals. It could be argued that the Chapare was like a colony that maintained rather loose –but regular- relations with the metropolis; relations that allowed the colony to maintain its relative autonomy, maintaining however its relation with the metropolis in a such a way that helped it legitimize itself both inside and outside the local context. In fact, it never broke its relation with the Bolivian state until the state itself decided to strengthen its presence in the region. Raquel Gutierrez summarizes it thusly:

"The [only] presence the State had in the Chapare was in the form of the leopardos, and of the police. Militarized police that were fucking them. And that was paid by the gringos. Y punto!"[109]

Autonomy Violated

Cynthia McClintock (1998) argues that the cause of revolutionary movements cannot be located in stable factors, in things that have always remained the same in a given context. If that was the case, revolutionary movements would have appeared earlier within a given context. Therefore, what social and political scientists should be looking at when examining revolutionary movements should be those bigger or smaller changes that altered the socio-political power balance in a given context and set in motion mechanisms that produced the revolutionary movements. In the case of the Chapare, where the first colonizers-cocaleros had started building their autonomous institutions and strengthening their relative autonomy, things are rather straightforward:

Two major changes occurred that forced the *cocalero* Unions to deepen their political and social organization. The first is the arrival of the miners, which greatly surged after 1985, although this was not a novelty in the region. Miners had for decades been relocating to the Chapare in search of a better life away from the harsh conditions of the mines or the violence with which their demands were normally met by the authorities. It cannot be denied, however, that in this instance the relocation was on a massive scale, since between 22.000 (Hesketh and Morton 2014, 158) and 27.000 (de la Torre 2013, 277) tin miners lost their jobs in the industry[110] and a significant number of them decided to move to the Chapare. In addition, the miners carried with them with them their left-wing militancy and political formation, which was absent from the Chapare, as well as the

[109] Personal interview with Raquel Gutierrez Aguilar, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 10-08-2013 in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.

[110] Between 27.000 and 30.000 according to Webber (2012, 119).

determination not to lose their livelihood for a second time. However, what was a novelty in the region was the intrusion of the state –through its repressive forces- that violated the relative autonomy of the cocaleros, interrupted the power balance that had been established until then, challenged the authority of the *sindicatos*, and of course severely affected the economic activity of the region and the production and trade of its most profitable crop: the coca leaf.

Begning in 1988 with the Law 1008, the Bolivian state essentially broke its silent pact with the *sindicatos* of the Chapare. Until that point the *Chapareños* would, needless to say, vote in the national and local elections, although even at a local level the authorities would remain distant and would instead allow the *sindicato* to run the day to day activities in the region. Don Feliciano Mamani, the current[111] Mayor of Villa Tunari, remembers that in those times the *Chapareños* did not even know what their local and regional authorities looked like because they would carefully stay away from the harsh conditions of the region[112]. From 1988 onwards though, the state authorities would now have a face for the *Chapareños.* And a uniform: that of the *leopardos*.

At the time, in response to international pressure to reduce the coca production in the country, the Bolivian state had decided to exercise its authority, legal and otherwise. In an effort to regulate the coca production it introduced Law 1008, which as we have seen would define which regions could continue to grow the crop and which could not. The Chapare –with the exceptions of the Yungas Vandiola- fell into the second category, a fact that would disturb the power balance in the region and would instigate the *cocalero* response that would eventually bring them to the seat of government. Law 1008 acted as

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[111] As of March, 2014.

[112] Personal interview with Feliciano Mamani, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis and Tomás Astelarra on 05-10-2013 in Villa Tunari, Chapare.

an alarm bell for the *Chapareños.* It reminded them that they may have been living in a condition of relative autonomy until then, but their autonomy was exactly that: relative, within a centralized state that had the authority to take collective decisions from above and impose them by force if necessary.

The *cocaleros* themselves now had to react. Until that point the state had allowed them to build their own institutions and run their day-to-day activities rather autonomously, as long as they reported back to it to register the land they were administering. Furthermore, when it came to their economic activities the state did not interfere particularly, which had allowed them enjoy the "coca boom"[113] of the 1970s. In 1988, however, things had changed: the price of the coca leaf had dropped, production had risen due to the arrival of the former miners that had been laid off from the tin industry, and the state had begun interfering to regulate the production under a U.S. threat to freeze its aid money if it did not do so (J. R. Webber 2012).

At this stage, the *sindicatos* had to decide what political strategy to follow in order to fight back. The first thing they tried –that with which they were most familiar- was to voice their concerns through protest marches, road blockades, and trade unionism. They failed. The state responded with a militarization of the area and unprecedented violence. Then came the most "fateful moment" for the *cocalero* movement: what to do next?

[113] Known as the *"Auge de la coca".*

¡Guerilla!

The issue of the armed struggle, *la guerrilla*, has always been a taboo topic in the Chapare and it still is even today when the Six Federations and the MAS are running the state apparatus themselves. This is so because both the Six Federations and their President have been accused of being drug-traffickers and terrorists several times in the past, while some of them have even been arrested on such charges and their cases are still being processed (although they claim that most of the times fabricated the charges were fabricated). Another reason is the fact that that the option of the *guerrilla* was on the table almost two decades ago, although of course not openly. However, many *dirigentes* of the time were either killed in the years of repression that followed, died of old age, or have long retired. Therefore it is very difficult to find "key persons" to interview who are knowledgeable and willing enough to talk about it.

Intial efforts to explore the armed struggle option were in vain. The people interviewed either did not know or were not willing to share their information with outsiders. Miguelina Villaroel Lafuente, for example, a female deputy of the MAS today (as of 2014) and one of the first women to get involved with the Six Federations insists that the *cocaleros* of the Chapare never possessed weapons nor did they ever consider armed struggle as a strategy[114]. Leonardo Marca, a legendary *dirigente* of the Six Federation to whom we were redirected by another veteran *dirigente* with the certainty that he would be able to talk about the *guerrilla*, also denied any relationship with it, apart from the *autodefensas* that were organized, although he claims that they only used with wooden sticks[115]. This would seem to make sense. Don Leonardo was arrested in the past on, what

[114] Interview with Miguelina Villaroel Lafuente conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis and Tomás Astelarra on 27 September 2013 in Lauca Ñ, Chapare.

[115] Personal Interview with Leonardo Marca, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 09 October 2013 in Chipiriri, Chapare.

he claims, are fabricated charges of terrorism, and his trial is still pending. However, other veteran *dirigentes* were more willing –or more knowledgeable- to talk.

Don Feliciano Mamani, the current Mayor of Villa Tunari (as of April 2014) has risked everything for the movement and has nothing to be scared of. In 2000, when the *verdes*[116] tried to kill Evo Morales, he defended him with a sling, was chased into the jungle and a volley from a UMOPAR machine-gun went through his leg. After two months in the hospital during which time he was on the verge of losing one of his feet, he finally recovered and today he can walk- with difficulty, but with two legs on the ground.

"We thought of organizing ourselves like in Cuba, armed struggle, and we got together in every sindicato and we were planning (the armed struggle)….they want to expel us from here, we cannot leave it (the land) to private businesses, the struggle is not only for the coca, it is for dignity and land. In 1994 we were already thinking of the organized armed struggle, the autodefensas were already there and there was the idea, at least amongst the dirigentes, –including Evo- that the autodefensas could become the nucleus of a future rebel army.. There were many dead, no respect for human rights, all the schools that we built ourselves were used as barracks, the buses were afraid of the people in uniform. And it was critical, all of us were already armed to the teeth like an army, and it was ugly."[117]

However, the Cuban revolution was not the only reference point for the cocaleros of Chapare:

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[116] The "greens", which refers to the soldiers.

[117] Personal interview with Feliciano Mamani, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis and Tomás Astelarra on 05-10-2013 in Villa Tunari, Chapare.

"Seeing Zapatismo we said to ourselves: Why not here in Bolivia? There was autodefensa *everywhere, we were thinking. We will revolt on our own or we will revolt at national level. We were already in contact with other [national] organizations, we were saying: we have to smash the power through the* via armada*."* (ibid.)

Don Humberto Claro also recalls how the *sindicatos* had a rich archive of the EZLN, and were thinking of organizing the armed struggle. For this purpose they had started contacting the indigenous *Yuracaré* of the region to join them in the struggle. Indeed they had even started arming them with weapons they had brought from outside the Chapare. They had gone so far as thinking of preparing video material that would be used in the military training (Ramos Salazar 2012). In a televised interview given in 1999 together with Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar, Álvaro Garcia Linera, Bolivia's current vice-president (as of November 2015), mentioned that the EGTK was also involved in the formation of the self-defence units of the Chapareño *cocaleros* (Linera and Gutiérrez Aguilar 1999). Stewart Prest also argues –based on interviews he conducted in the Chapare- that not only had the EGTP started training cells in the Chapare in the late 80s-early 90s, but also that Evo Morales was informed and at least consented to their presence there:

"CL made clear that there was a level of knowledge and tolerance, even approval of his work among cocalero *leadership at the highest level:*

Q: Did you have some connection with Don Evo at the time?

CL: Yes, but only as a guarantee, I mean, he actually made contact with us.

Q: Was there any discussion of grand strategy?

CL: Well, yes, at a very global level, that armed struggle ought to be initiated. Overall, in general terms of armed struggle and the discussion of what work we had implemented, and his acceptance [of that] on his part. Fundamentally [there was] endorsement, acceptance, because without that acceptance we could have been denounced immediately.

Definitely we would have had the coca compañeros against us, or they could have treated us as narco-trafficking groups… they could have tipped an UMOPAR in that zone looking for narcos." (Prest 2015, 189)

Don Dario Mendoza highlights the role of the miners in the radicalization of the *sindicatos cocaleros*:

"In the mining centres if you have a *fusil*, a rifle, a dagger, you have to go and fight. We were preparing ourselves to go to the struggle from the week before; we were all fabricating hand grenades. Here the organizations were humble." He remembers an episode in 1995 during which seven soldiers were surrounded by *cocaleros* in Cotoca, there was need for help, and he got ready to go:

"I thought it was as if the mineros were doing it, [and] I got on the truck alone with my weapon, and seeing the way the people were looking at me I said: well, I am wrong, I will go leave it at home. They were coming just like that, without anything. But thanks to the miners we found the struggle. In Carrasco more than 30% were organized miners, and it was so in every federation…We were organizing the autodefensas*, the committee of self defence was responsible for gathering everything it could, for providing defence from the armed enemy, because they were shooting bullets at us and we were throwing stones at them. It wasn't convenient. We wanted to buy everything we could in order to confront [the soldiers], we organized ourselves with huarakas, slings; those who were scared would stay back, the daring up front; when they would kill them the soldiers would escape. My companions died there for the first time. But my idea was very different, I already wanted [the guerrilla], we already had some people to confront [the soldiers], Evo would become*

a guerillero; the only thing missing was money, because in Bolivia we were well organized." [118]

Don Filemón Escóbar also provides us with a similar account in his book *De la revolución al Pachakuti: el aprendizaje del respeto reciproco entre blancos e indianos* (2008:179):

"…the concept of the guerilla was weighing heavily on the consciousness of each producer, young, mature, or old. They were all trained to fabricate 'caza bobos' *including of course the women."*

Despite the fact that the *cocaleros* of the Chapare were inclined (and maybe even pushed) towards armed struggle, they did at the same time recognize their limitations. They knew that they were poorly armed, and that they would have to fight a superior, well-trained army that also had the support of the U.S.A. They also knew that the *guerrilla* would be a costly business, both in terms of financial resources and in terms of human capital:

"We didn't start the armed struggle for lack of money, the consciousness was ready, we were saying: we have to do it now…" remembers Don Dario; while Don Feliciano narrates:

"We thought: we don't fabricate ammunition, nor weapons, what are we going to do? The others, since they fabricate arms, will shoot us."

However, if there is one person that from the very beginning was against the armed struggle option and had worked silently for years in order to persuade the Six Federations to take the electoral route, that person –as almost all the interviewees pointed out- was Don Filemón Escóbar, *el viejo Filippo* of the Bolivian left.

[118] Personal Interview with Dario Mendoza, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis and Tomás Astelarra on 29-09-2013 in Entre Rios, Chapare.

El viejo Filippo

Students of political science and sociology normally spend hours studying articles and books instructing them how to conduct interviews in the field. There are mountains of articles out there on every single specific category of interviewees and interviews: elite-interviews, semi-structured interviews, life stories. It could be argued that there should be a separate, unique category in this bibliography for Don Filemón Escóbar alone, the living history of the Bolivian left. I had been looking for him ever since I started my fieldwork in the Chapare. I knew he was living in Cochabamba, I even managed to get a mobile phone number that allegedly belonged to his son whom I never managed to reach, while rumours had it that he wasn't in good health and it would be difficult to arrange an interview. However, a few days before leaving Cochabamba, thanks to the help of my host at the Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios (CESU) of the Universidad de San Simón of Cochabamba Fernando Mayorga, I got the phone number of his house.

-"Hello, may I speak to Don Filemón? My name is Leonidas and I am a researcher from Greece. I am in Cochabamba and…"

-"*Grecia*? Where are you now? Come and find me at this address in two hours."

That was it: my most key interviewee was waiting for me in his office, in a well-off district of Cochabamba two hours later.

Don Filemón has seen the whole history of the modern-day Bolivian left unfold in front of his eyes. He is old enough to have been at the Plaza Murillo during the revolution of 1952, already a miner-unionist at that time, and his political beliefs and efforts led him to spend several years in prison and exile. Once, together with other political prisoners, he was even exiled in the Chapare "long before Evo ever set foot there", as he proudly emphasizes. According to his account, for the Bolivian revolutionary left and the Communist Party in particular –and this is something Raquel Gutiérrez also confirmed as

being the case for the EGTK in which she was involved- the Chapare was not considered a very relevant place for political work and recruitment for two reasons. Firstly, the *Chapareños* were not exploited workers, instead they were small landowners and tradesmen, and therefore they did not form part of the proletariat that should be the revolutionary subject according to the revolutionary handbooks of the time. Secondly, the economic activities of the region would make it very easy for the state to associate any revolutionary political activity there with drug-trafficking, therefore endangering and weakening any revolutionary prospect. In addition, up until 1985 the flag bearers of the Bolivian left –who had already led a revolution and several revolts until then- were undoubtedly the miners, who also happened to generate a disproportionate share of the Bolivian GDP compared to their numbers; a fact that made the Bolivian economy heavily dependent on their sector. A miner's strike was able to freeze the whole state economy in those times, for that reason it was very often answered with brutal violence. However, with the collapse of tin prices and the Decree 21060 of 1985, the mining sector was massively weakened and together with it the miners' syndicalism, which as a result lost its significant importance for the Bolivian Left.

At the final Congress of the FSTMB Miners' Federation in Oruro, Filemón Escóbar was approached by a *quechua* revolutionary who told him that the mine of Siglo XX was over; and that together with the mines the miners were also no longer the laboratory of the Bolivian revolution; the new Catavi and Siglo XX would be found in the Tropics of Cochabamba. "I listened carefully to this *compañero*" Don Filemón would write years later, "His name is Felix Cardenas. He never appeared in the Tropics, but I followed his instructions" (Escóbar 2008, 297).

Don Filemón had found his new revolutionary subjects: he already knew that some of his ex-*compañero* miners were already there, and he also knew that the *cocaleros* of Chapare would need political instruction if they were to fulfil that role. So, he decided to move to the Chapare, which he already knew from his years of exile, to become the main

political educator of the *cocalero* grassroots and leaders, including Evo Morales Ayma himself.

The thesis of Pulacayo

When Don Filemón arrived in the Chapare as a cultural advisor on behalf of the COB he approached the leaders of the *sindicatos*, offered his expertise, and immediately started work: he participated in the organisation of more than 200 seminar workshops from 1984 to 2004, in all Six Federations, but also in the *centrales* and the *sindicatos* of the Tropics. Additionally, the seminars were extended to the whole of the Cochabamba valley, the *ayllus* of Potosi, the provinces of Oruro, Penas, Challapata, Huari, Tarija, Carapari, Yacuiba, Caranavi, Cobija, and Yungas La Paz. Of course, even though all the experts and activists I spoke to recognize Don Filemón's prominent role in this process, he was not the only political educator of the *cocaleros*. David Choquehuanca, politically trained in Cuba and heading a consortium of NGOs that acted under the Nina programme (meaning fire in Aymara), also played a very prominent role organizing dozens of farmer's capacitation workshops in the region. According to Pablo Stefanoni (2010, 147) it was through this path (the influence of Escóbar and Choquehuanca) that the ethnic/culturalist discourse reached Evo Morales, who was until then more influenced by the revolutionary syndicalist tradition of the '50s and had a cosmo-vision that was restricted to the *campesino* demands. Other intellectuals, such as Germán Choquehuanca and journalist Alex Contreras, had also participated in this process. Sandra Ramos Salazar (2012, 106) notes that all these intellectuals and ex-union leaders had aimed at advising and influencing –first and foremost- the *Federacion Especial de Trabajadores Campesinos del Tropico de Cochabamba,* the biggest and most influential of the Federations. However none of them was as influential as Filemón Escóbar, who remained the advisor of the movement until it came to state power.

"Our seminars were targeted at persuading the Chapareños *of the historical importance of intervening in the elections within the framework of western representative democracy. I am sure that those history lectures overturned the* guerrilla *tendencies which were growing in the Tropics."* (Escóbar 2008, 187)

In order to overcome the *guerrilla* tendencies that had as a reference-point the successful examples of the Cuban revolution and the Zapatista uprising and were resonating in the Tropics of Cochabamba, Don Filemón and the other like-minded intellectuals had to fight for the *ideological hegemony*[119] within the *sindicatos*. To do so, they first had to persuade the *Chapareños* of the arguments against the option of armed struggle, bringing as examples two historical failed *guerrilla* attempts in Bolivia: that of Che Guevara in 1967, and of Teoponte –who had aspired to follow Che's attempt- in 1970. However, deconstructing the argument of the advocates of armed struggle was not enough, there also had to be a counter-proposal in favour of the electoral participation, also based on tangible -contemporary or historical- examples that would act as the new reference-point for the *Chapareños.* The one selected was the Thesis of Pulacayo.

On November 8, 1946, in the mine of Pulacayo, the FSTMB (*Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia*- Union Federation of Bolivian Mine Workers), the spearhead of the Bolivian left, held an extraordinary meeting to re-evaluate its political strategy a few months after the toppling and assassination of President Gualberto Villaroel, under conditions of heavy repression. During that meeting the position of the Trotskyist current of the FSTMB (expressed mainly through Guillermo Llora) prevailed and the Union adopted the Thesis of Pulacayo, which essentially represented the adoption of Trotsky's Transitional programme in Bolivia (Hesketh and Morton 2014, 166; Dunkerely 1984, 17). What was to prove particularly inspiring for Don Filemón Escóbar proved to be chapter VIII, titled 'Direct mass action and Parliamentary Struggle', which stated among other things:

[119] The term is obviously borrowed from Gramsci's cultural hegemony.

“We declare that by prioritizing the direct action of the masses, we do not defy the importance of other methods of struggle…The parliamentary struggle is important, but in times when the revolutionary movement rises, it acquires a secondary character. For parliamentarism to play a vital role, it has to subordinate itself to the direct action of the masses. In moments of flux, when the masses abandon the struggle and the bourgeoisie appropriates the positions that they leave, parliamentarism can be prioritized.(Escóbar 2008, 167)”

“We have to bring to the Parliament tested elements that identify themselves with our Union line” the Thesis continued, describing the *organic intellectuals* –to put it in Gramscian terms- that the miners had to bring to the parliament. Following the Thesis of Pulacayo, the miners’ federation took the decision to participate in the –then- forthcoming elections with their own candidates, rank and file members of the FSTMB, who were selected by the general assemblies of the Union. That ‘parliamentary brigade’ of the FSTMB was called *Bloque Parlamentario Minero* (Miner’s Parliamentary Block-BPM) and managed to elect for the first time in history 12 deputies and two senators in the elections of 1947, with particular success in Oruro and Potosi where the representatives of the BPM, Juan Lechin and Luis Mendivi, received 2,000 and 5,191 votes respectively. The success was enormous because Oruro and Potosi at that time had long been the most important political and economic centres of the country, which make their achievement equivalent to an electoral victory in modern-day La Paz or Santa Cruz (ibid. 169). Let us also note that this electoral victory took place before the introduction of universal suffrage in Bolivia, which was one of the contributions of the revolution of 1952. The idea was that the combination of direct action and parliamentary struggle would create a ‘dual power’ condition in which the grassroots would be able to press for social change from below, facilitated by the presence of their own representatives within the country’s official governing institutions. The experience of the *Bloque Minero Parlamentario* did not last too long; in 1949 it was expelled from the Parliament. However, it persuaded many on the Bolivian left that the road to social change could also pass through the Parliament, and for

Don Filemón it became a reference point in the seminars of political education he would lead more than 30 years later in the Chapare. The success of the BMP, however, did not blind Don Filemón who had also identified its *Achilles heel*: the fact that it managed to get representatives elected only in a few regions and not all over the country. "We had to do the same thing, but this time not only at the local level, but rather nation-wide.[120]"

When Don Filemón, as a cultural advisor of the *cocaleros* on behalf of the COB[121], started organizing his workshops in the Chapare, the Thesis of Pulacayo was at their core. The main target was to persuade the *Chapareños* of the importance of the complementarity of direct action and parliamentary politics, which were normally seen as self-exclusive in Bolivia. In addition, the workshops were intended to educate the *cocaleros* of the complementarity (and not the exclusion) of two different forms of democracy that were present in the country: the communitarian assemblyist one of the *ayllus* and the miners, and the representative of the official political system.

It was not easy, however, to beat the *guerrilla* tendencies that were prevailing in the Chapare in those times, where participation in the elections was seen as a tactic and not as the strategy. Keeping "the electoral [card] in one hand and the fusil on the other under the *poncho*" was one of the ideas that were gaining more and more popularity in the Chapare, while Evo himself kept advocating the fact that even the first electoral successes of the movement had not managed to stop the forced eradication programs, and therefore the movement had to keep working with its self-defence committees "that would be the core of our future *guerrilla* movement" (Escóbar 2008, 202). Only after the huge success of the 1997 elections that brought Evo to the parliament as a deputy, did the

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[120] Personal interview with Filemón Escóbar, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 23-10-2013 in Cochabamba.

[121] Traditionally, at the core of the COB was the FSTMB, the miners' union. However, within the miners' union and the COB there had always existed an ongoing struggle for ideological hegemony of that was fought between the different fractions of the left (the Trotskyist Partido Obrero Revolucionario, the communist Partido Comunista Boliviano, the Partido de la Izquierda Revolucionario, the left-wing of the Movimiento Nacional Revolutionario etc.).

guerrilla tendencies start to lose ground and the electoral road won more and more supporters (Stefanoni 2010, 147). Pablo Stefanoni argues that what the c*ampesino* movement of Bolivia approved in the end was a kind of *Campesino Thesis of Pulacayo*, adapted to the modern needs and realities: "if in 1947 the Federation of Miners managed to elect deputies and Senators, based on their influence in Oruro and Potosi, the MAS-IPSP managed to advance in the national political arena from the cocalero-Chapare…just like the miners of those times, the cocaleros had started considering themselves the vanguard of the popular movement."(Stefanoni 2010, 142)

Nevertheless, it seems that before the 2002 elections, the MASistas did not really believe they would be able to win the Presidency, but were nevertheless convinced of the importance of the duality of powers:

"We are not going to win the presidency," said Luis Gomes, one of the members of the MAS electoral campaign committee of 2002 to Raquel Gutiérrez *"…but we are going to establish a stronghold of 'ours' within the old institutions, [a stronghold] as solid as possible."* (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008, 212)

The battle for ideological hegemony had been won.

The electoral route (la LPP)

It has been argued (Silva 2009; Yashar 2005a) that one of the conditions that account for the increased mobilization of Latin American indigenous movements in the past two decades, a mobilization that mostly took the form of electoral participation and rejected the armed struggle, is the recent openness of political associational space in the region (Bolivia, Ecuador, etc.); what in social movement studies we have learned to call *political opportunities*. In the case of the Chapare, the relevant bibliography (Silva 2009; Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008; de la Torre 2013; Postero 2010; Farthing and Kohl 2010; Hesketh and Morton 2014; Albro 2005) rightly focuses on the 1994 Popular Participation Law (*Ley*

1551 de Participación Popular- LPP) that was promulgated by the government of Gonzalez '*Goni'* Sánchez de Lozada on April 20 of that year. According to this theory, the LPP should have been the main factor behind the emergence of the MAS, the political instrument of the Six Federations. The chronology of the events also points to that direction: the First Congress of Land, Territory, and Political Instrument, where the decision was made to create the *Asamblea por la Soberania de los Pueblos*- ASP (forefather of the MAS), took place in 1995 in Santa Cruz, only one year after the promulgation of the LPP. However, as we have seen in this Chapter, the Six Federations of Coca Producers of Chapare had long been working towards the creation of a *political instrument*. They had even started taking actions in that direction almost a decade before the promulgation of the law, with the seminars of Don Filemón and other intellectuals and union leaders. It should also be noted that this was not the first time that indigenous peoples would organize themselves in political parties and participate in the elections, regardless of whether those parties were new or old. As Félix Patzi (2002, cited in Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008, 191) notes, such efforts on behalf of the Bolivian indigenous peoples can be traced back to the experience of the Movimiento Indio Tupaj Katari (MITKA) in the seventies, and that of the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupaj Katari de Liberacion (MRTKL) in the eighties. Pablo Stefanoni (2010) also emphasizes the fact that the plan to create a political instrument had been discussed by the Bolivian *campesino* movement ever since 1988 at least. Moreover, recent research (Silva 2009; Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008; Postero 2010; Farthing and Kohl 2010; Hesketh and Morton 2014;) points to the fact that the promulgation of the LPP was itself a rather top-down initiative on behalf of the state to direct political mobilization towards the already existing official political structures and institutions and to "incorporate predominantly indigenous areas into a liberal conception of empowerment through local politics." (Silva 2009, 117)

The Popular Participation Law was intended to encourage the participation of indigenous peoples in the local governance of their municipalities by redistributing 20% of the national budget to the local municipalities (instead of the until-then 10%) and passing over to them decisions on issues of health, education, and infrastructure. A total of 311 local municipalities were created and at least 464 indigenous candidates won local

administration office in the 1997 elections (Albro 2005). However, as Farthing and Kohl (2010) and Postero (2010) emphasize, the law did not really reduce the structural inequalities the indigenous peoples of Bolivia faced, since it passed over to them the responsibility of allocating an increased share of the national budget on health, education, and infrastructure projects decided and controlled by the local governments, without handing them the administration of their own natural resources as well. That task was left in the hands of large multinationals. Carlos de la Torre (de la Torre 2013, 278) notes that the LPP was viewed at the time as a "neopopulist" effort on behalf of the government to build an electoral clientele for the MNR and other researchers (Postero 2010; Silva 2009) agree that it was also an effort to incorporate the indigenous peoples and their structures into the national neoliberal project. When it comes to the Chapare itself, it seems that there was an additional reason for the state to want to incorporate the *Chapareños* into its official state structures. The Six federations of Chapare had replaced the state in the area and had become *de facto* autonomous, having already built their own educational, health, and infrastructural projects with their own hands and resources, without being overly dependent on the central administration. Furthermore, it was no secret that the *Chapareños* had already started mobilizing against the Law 1008, with their mobilizations also taking violent forms. At the same time, the idea of a violent armed struggle was very influential in the Chapare according to the interviews conducted by the author, as well as according to accounts provided by several Bolivian intellectuals and theorists (Stefanoni 2010; Escóbar 2008; Contreras 2013b).

Therefore, it could be argued that the LPP also had that function in the case of the Chapare: to institutionalize the local autonomy of the local unions by making them dependent on state resources, and to direct their discontent towards a formal, legal, and non violent direction. It succeeded in the latter, but not in the former. The *Chapareños* perceived the new law as a top-down effort to 'restrict' and 'control' their hard-won and hard-built autonomy and decided to take over the new formal structures that the LPP would create without, however, compromising their mobilization capacities and strategies. That political strategy –as we have already seen in Chapter 5- led them to win not only the local municipalities (and the associated relevant funds) that were established,

but also to win the national elections as well –riding on the wave of popular discontent that shook Bolivia between 2000 and 2005-.

Therefore, we can argue that the promulgation of the LPP –and thus the opening of the political opportunities structure- was *not* the main factor behind the participation of the *cocalero* movement in the *national* elections, because that process had begun long before the promulgation of the law and because such efforts had already taken place in Bolivia decades before the LLP. However, it cannot be denied that the LPP became an additional incentive for the Six Federations to take the electoral road for the following reason: it put their hard-won autonomy under threat, and the participation in the elections was a way of protecting and strengthening it. In addition, LPP surely became an additional argument for the advocates of the electoral participation and against those –including Evo Morales himself- who were inclined towards the armed struggle.

The mobilization of women

It should here be noted that the *cocaleros* of the Chapare -in a process not unrelated to the political strategy they had chosen to adopt from 1995 onwards- decided to organize the women in a similar federation structure as that of the men (see chapter 5). It must be noted here that the Chapare was a rather conservative environment back then (and still is) and the fact that the organization of the women into *sindicatos*, *centrales*, and federations did not happen earlier than 1995, points to the fact that the two processes – that of the creation of the political instrument and that of the engagement of the women- are not unrelated.

Justina Maldonado came to the Chapare from Potosi in 1988 in a similar way to how most of the *colonos* of the region arrived: through family/social networks. An uncle of hers used to live in the Chapare and Justina left Potosi to look for a better life there.

Today she is one of the *dirigentas* of the Central of *Eterazama* and the Federacion de Mujeres Campesinas del Tropico de Cochabamba.

"In those times there was no women's organization, there were reunions in every sindicato, but the women only helped with the cleaning; the coca was very cheap, we had just enough to buy bread and cooking oil, not meat. Then they came to eradicate the coca and the conflict began. It is painful to remember, here in the street we had vigilias*, it is there that we started struggling as women, we took the lead, because we were very little respected, but even though they [the soldiers] would kick us, they left it at that. The men on the other hand, they tortured them and then took them. Several times they were lost without news, they were made disappear, the dirigentes were persecuted, there was no place to meet up, no way to communicate with each other. Then we started organizing. The women were only useful for the cleaning, the cooking, the men were also studying. We could not read or write, for that reason they did not take us into account. From there we were organized as women, from those struggles we became dirigentas. We did not know what to say, how to argue, there was no equality..."*[122]

The story is similar to the gradual introduction of the participation of women in the Latin American guerilla movements that Wickham-Crowley studied (1993:21-22): In the first wave of revolutionary movements (1960s) the participation of women was rather limited and mostly relegated to "support/making the coffee" roles. Female participation increased in the second wave of guerrillas (1970s and 1980s) though, both quantitatively (reaching one third and one fourth in the Nicaraguan and El Salvadorian cases respectively) and in terms of responsibilities undertaken.

When it comes to the Chapare, it is not clear whether the organization of women was a self-emancipatory project or a top-down –however still emancipatory- one led by the men. According to Juana Quispe (Ramos Salazar 2012, 54) "…thanks to the assistance

[122] Personal interview with Justina Maldonado, conducted by Leonidas Oikonomakis on 10-10-2013 in Eterazama.

of the *compañeros* we manage to organize, headed by *compañero* Evo...*they* decided to remove machismo from our heart, we put this machismo aside because we were obliged to do so by the injustice, and we agreed.”

Whether or not it was a top-down or a bottom-up initiative, however, the self-organization of the women of the Chapare did indeed have an emancipatory effect for the *cocaleras*. And it also certainly had a symbolic and practical effect for the movement itself and its organizational capacity.

¡Erradiquen su nariz!

The cocaleros of the Chapare, as Fernando Mayorga once told the author of this thesis, were not particularly ideological until U.S. imperialism “invaded” their lands and violated their autonomy demanding the eradication of their coca bushes. The cocaleros clearly saw that the introduction of the Bolivian ant-drug army and police units in the Chapare happened because of U.S. pressure on the Bolivian governments. This was even more obvious, not only to the cocaleros but to the rest of the Bolivians as well, through the interventions of the American Ambassador in Bolivia Manuel Rocha. Therefore, it is not surprising that the cocaleros became deeply anti-imperialist.

“*Kawsachun coca, wanuchun Yanquis*!” (“Long live coca, death to the Yankees!” in Quechua) was one of the most well-known slogans of the cocaleros during their mobilizations.

However, to the author’s best knowledge at least, they did not develop any kind of anti-capitalist praxis. Quite the contrary. As Raquel Gutiérrez narrated to the author of this thesis in an interview, they even used the free market argument in order to counter the U.S. pressure for coca eradication. Considering that the U.S. market was where cocaine was mainly consumed, the cocaleros were using the same argument the American government was making, the other way round:

“We have free market no? We produce a raw material and you want to eradicate it; a raw material that is not cocaine. Eradicate your noses! They were using their rhetoric the other way round.” (Interview with Raquel Gutiérrez)

As far as my own fieldwork is concerned now, while anti-imperialism was very prominent in the interviews I conducted with cocalero militants, mayors, and governors, capitalism and resistance to it, or the development of anti-capitalist relations amongst the cocaleros at least, never came up as a topic in the interviews I conducted. It does come up every now and then in Evo’s rhetoric, and in García Linera’s writings, but the actual policies of their government are in a completely capitalist direction[123]. In Canessa’s words:

“Their discourse may be anti-capitalist on one hand, in the sense of being against large multinational corporations, but clearly seek economic growth in capitalist markets; they simply want better access to these markets. In the case of coca growers, they seek the legalisation of market.” (Canessa 2014, 160)

Conclusion

Recent literature on the social movements that shook Latin America in the past fifteen years (Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, even Venezuela earlier on) has rightfully placed its focus the timing and the reasoning of the mobilisations, as well as on the conditions and processes that made them possible. It has also emphasized the fact that the mobilizations eventually led to the electoral participation of the movements, normally around a coalition of newly emerging parties, with the old traditional ones being totally discredited. In a nutshell, it has been argued that the neoliberal turn of the aforementioned governments led to the dissatisfaction of the overall population (mainly the middle and lower classes), a fact that in its own turn led to the abandonment of the traditional political parties that were viewed as corrupt and responsible for the crisis. In

[123] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyze the MAS’ economic policies. For a critical analysis see J. R. Webber (2010; 2014) and J. R. Webber and Carr (2013).

other words, this argument confirms the political opportunity structure argument which has it that once in a given context political opportunities are opened, it is more probable that social movements will take advantage of them and that they will take an electoral –non violent- turn. At the same time and in parallel, trans-community movement ties and the opening of political associational space facilitated the emergence of social movements that chose the participation in the elections to reform the political and economic system. However, what the literature does not explain is why and how these movements chose that political strategy over another, such as armed struggle or that of autonomy.

In Bolivia the focus of the relevant literature has unavoidably been placed on the MAS and its rise to state power, riding on the 2000-2005 wave of popular protest that shook the country. Little focus has, however, been placed on the movement whose political instrument the MAS was: the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba. Surprisingly enough, very little on-the-ground research has been conducted in the Chapare itself, and the role of the men and women who built this political instrument has been rather underestimated in the relevant literature. When and why did they come up with the idea of building a political instrument? Why did they decide to participate in the elections, and not remain autonomous from the state as they used to be, or start a *guerrilla* war? The literature has it that in democratic regimes, where repression is low, movements are more likely to adopt a reformist strategy within the frames of the political system, while in dictatorial or in generally more repressive regimes movements are more likely to opt for the armed struggle. The case of the *cocaleros* does not really confirm the theory. In the Chapare repression was high both under dictatorial and under democratic regimes: between 1982 and 2004, 206 *cocaleros* were killed, 519 injured, 121 were tortured, 447 were whipped, and some 4.134 were detained (compiled data from Salazar Ortuno et al. 2008). However, even though repression was high –and actually exactly when repression reached its highest levels- the movement decided to opt for the electoral road to social change. How and why did that happen? What mechanisms made it possible? Why did the *cocaleros* not opt for the armed struggle instead? In addition, in the relevant literature,

one will find very little –if any- references to the *guerrilla* plans of the *cocaleros*. Nevertheless, they were on the table and they weighed heavily on the political consciousness of the locals, as we have seen in this chapter. There was a long internal struggle for ideological hegemony within the movement itself that ended with the victory of those arguing for the participation in the elections and against the guerrilla tendencies. The reasons why the electoral struggle was preferred though, have to be searched for in the combination of the following factors: a) a long political and ideological preparation of the movement on behalf of intellectuals and union leaders of the left; and b) the study of previous political experiences within and outside the country and their failures and successes.

When it comes to the political preparation of the grassroots and leaders, we have to note the following: (a) of significant importance were the historical examples that the political instructors used to inspire the *cocaleros* and persuade them that their proposed strategy has been tried before and it actually worked (*Tesis de Pulacayo, Bloque Parlamentario Minero*), against counter-proposals that did not (Che's *guerrilla* for example); (b) all these examples were the product of the study of previous political experiences, both within and outside the country, current or past, and were strengthened by; (c) the lack of know-how and the expected high-cost of the armed struggle, which may also be related to (b). Thanks to the combination of the above-mentioned factors, the argument of the supporters of the electoral road to social change became hegemonic in the Chapare.

CHAPTER VIII

Opening up the Black Box

CHAPTER VIII

OPENING UP THE BLACK BOX

This thesis started with two central questions. The first has to do with how revolutionary movements choose what political strategy to follow in their quest for social change. This question refers to the mechanisms that are set in motion in order for the movements to select their political strategy. In Chapter II I identified what the options available for social movements that want to bring about (or block) social change are. A model was created which distinguishes between essentially *two different roads* to social change: one that passes through the seizure of state power (the *state power road*) and one that avoids any relationship with the state or its functions (the *non-state power road*). The *state power road* also has two separate *routes*, depending on the means the movements choose in order to seize state power: the *electoral route*, which refers to the movement's participation in parliamentary/electoral processes, and the *insurgent route,* which refers to the revolutionary seizure of state power. The above-mentioned roads and routes and their characteristics have been analyzed thoroughly in Chapter II of this thesis.

However, the roads available to bring about social change are one thing; the road the movements decide to follow is another. The former defines the horizon of opportunity for the movements. The latter defines the movements' choice of political strategy. Normally movements are forced to deal with the consequences of such a decision for a long time in a path-dependence fashion. But how is that decision taken? What mechanisms are set in motion, internal and external to the movement, that influence that crucial decision? And, when the moment arrives –and very often it eventually does arrive- for the movement to make a shift from one *road* to social change to another, or from one *route* to another, why does it happen? And what mechanisms are responsible for the shift in a movement's political strategy?

Surprisingly enough, social movement theory is not particularly vocal when it comes to the aforementioned questions. While it is extremely vocal when it comes to *when* and *why* movements mobilize, as well as to what happens after that; what *form* they

take and what *repertoires* they adopt, what happens *in-between* remains in a black box for social movement studies. Therefore, while a lot of ink has been spilled on when movements mobilize and what form they take thenafter and why, an adequate focus has not been placed on the mechanism through which the political strategy of a movement is decided upon. This is the gap that this research intends to fill. Additionally, when it comes to the specific case-studies -the cases of the FLN/EZLN and the Six Federations of Coca Producers of the Tropics of Cochabamba- despite the vast production of books and articles around them over the last two decades, the question of their choice of political strategy has remained rather understudied – if not completely ignored- by the relevant literature. In answering this specific question, this thesis also fills a gap in the relevant literature that has to do with these specific case studies: In trying to answer the main research question, that is how their political strategy was initially formed, it was necessary to delve deep into the history of these movements, certain parts of which had been largely unknown to the studies so far conducted on them. This is the contribution of this thesis to the case-specific literature.

In Theory

Both *Institutionalists* and adherents to the *Political Opportunities Framework* agree that institutions and the political opportunities they provide or limit, shape the political strategies of movements. The relevant theory has it that when the political environment "opens up", movements are more likely to occupy the newly opened spaces and therefore mobilize within them. Normally, this process has the state at its core, with the movements mobilizing (or not) within the political space provided to them by it. In the cases where those political opportunities are absent, movements can still act with agency and create their own opportunities, however, even in those cases the state remains central to the political opportunities framework because it normally reacts to the movements' agency, again by restricting or widening their political space.

Deborah Yashar (Yashar 2005a) and Eduardo Silva (Silva 2009) seem to agree with this theory. In their works on social movement mobilization in Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, and Venezuela, they confirm that the presence of political associational space, within a

neoliberal restructuring of the economy, assisted by the presence of trans-community networks, facilitate social movement mobilization. They also emphasize the fact that social movements in those cases took a rather “reformist” stance, following the *electoral route* of the *state power road* in their quest for social change. Afterall, even Che Guevara himself had warned against the idea of unseating an elected government through guerilla warfare -before of course abandoning this thesis with his Bolivian endeavour (Wickham-Crowley 1993, 170). The reason is not only that democratically elected governments always leave the electoral path as an inviting alternative for the opposition, but also that -owing to their democratic election- they enjoy a high degree of legitimacy within the overall population. That way, it is extremely difficult for guerilla movements to attract both potential militants from the overall population and potential allies from the opposition.

However, while it is true that the opening (or closure) of political space is critical for the political strategy of movements, this does not mean that it determines it. What the political context does is that it widens or restricts the *options* of a movement, but it does not choose them for it. Therefore, political opportunity frameworks can explain when movements mobilize and maybe up to a certain extent what form that mobilization takes, but they cannot explain how the decision for the movement’s political strategy was taken. The choice of political strategy is, therefore, not just opportunistic. For that to be explained, in addition to the political context, we have to take a deep look into the movement’s history, its prevalent political convictions/ideology, and its internal battles for ideological hegemony.

When it comes to when and why movements choose to shift from one political strategy to another, theory identifies three main factors; a) political opportunities; b) internal changes (leadership change or change in the ideological hegemony, or a combination of the two), and; c) the acquisition of resources needed to make a “scale shift”.

However, what also plays a crucial role, however, perhaps the most crucial role, is what ideas resonate amongst the militants at the time the decision is taken. Normally, there is more than one option available, and more than one idea that resonates, therefore,

an internal battle for ideological hegemony has to be fought within the movement. The winners see their view prevail. The losers may accept the result, or decide to split from the movement.

In Practice: Mechanisms

Some of the most important mechanisms I have discovered, which are analyzed thoroughly in this chapter, are the following:

Cultural Resonance: When a revolutionary movement's political strategy is formed, what plays probably the most influential role in offering the initial ideas, the points where to start from, is the cultural resonance of experiences of other movements, across time and space. For both movements I am examining the Cuban Revolution was a very strong influence towards the *insurgent route*, while the Zapatistas were also influenced by the Sandinista experience and the cocaleros by that of the *Bloque Parlamentario Minero*, and the Bolivian Revolution of 1952 among others.

Learning: However, just like the widening or shrinking of political opportunities, resonance was not enough. Both movements I am examining entered a process of both secondary and primary research, scientific as the FLN used to call it, in order to see whether the resonating cases were apt for their own circumstances. In this process, both the organic and the external to the movements intellectuals played a crucial role, both in identifying successful political strategies and in discarding failed ones. In addition, the movements I studied also showed an incredible capacity of self-criticism and learning from their own past mistakes, a fact which proved extremely crucial for their own survival and success.

Propaganda and training: After their strategy was selected, the movements I study had to make sure that it would also enjoy the ideological hegemony within them. That was extremely important since it secured the discipline of their cadres, together of course with a system of sanctions that was established. It took place through direct and indirect training that took the form of publications (internal and external) and workshops.

Internal competition: In both cases I am examining, in several points in time, there appeared a strong internal competition amongst the movement leaders and intellectuals. The competition was not only about leadership, but also –and mainly- about ideological hegemony within the movement and it strongly affected its selected political strategies. And of course it did not involve only the movements' leaders and militants, but also their organic-or-allied intellectuals.

Cross-fertilization: The choice or change of the political strategies of the movements I study have also been a product of the productive dialogue between different sectors of the movement. In the case of Chiapas for example, the urban and rural cadres of the movement, *mestizos* and *indigenas*, exchanged ideas and practices and what today constitutes Zapatismo is a product of this dialogue. Of course this interaction also involved practices that were developed in the past between the indigenous peoples of Chiapas and the Maoist activists that had also spent time there. Through this process, the assemblyist communitarian *usos y costumbres* of the indigenous peoples, just to name an example, were expanded to also involve the women and the young unmarried men, challenging the authority of the community –strictly male- elders. This is a practice that both influenced and was influenced by the FLN/EZLN later on as well. The cocaleros on the other hand also entered a long dialogue with their allied intellectuals, which in its own term became crucial for the political strategy the movement adopted in the end.

Experimentation: When their political strategy was selected, especially in the cases in which it would be a novelty for the movement (autonomy/prefiguration in Chiapas – participating in electoral campaigns in the Chapare), it had to be experimented with before gaining some kind of legitimacy within the movement. Through this process, which constitutes an -in some way- "anti strategy" that the Zapatistas call "asking we walk," both the Zapatista autonomy and the MAS party structure was –and still is- formed.

The filter of ideology: At least in the case of the Zapatistas, the ideology that the movement had formed through the mechanisms described in this thesis itself became a filter through which several options would be considered acceptable or not. For example, the Zapatistas, both the FLN and the EZLN, have always been deeply anti-capitalist (not

just anti-neoliberal), therefore their political strategies were first and foremost loyal to that political convention of theirs. And the *autonomia Zapatista* they slowly built is also before anything else an anti-capitalist endeavour. In addition, the participation in the elections, to give another example, had become an option that wouldn't not pass through the ideological filter of the FLN/EZLN, since it had been discredited in the process of the political formation of the movement's members. Of course, it remained an option on the table; an option however that would have had great costs in terms of the loyalty of the movement's militants, as well as that of its supporters within the national and international civil society.

All the above mentioned mechanisms are analysed in more detail in the lines that follow.

The FLN/EZLN

When the FLN were established in 1969, all legal roads to social change seemed absolutely closed for the Mexican youth. After all, only one year earlier, the Mexican government of the PRI had carried out a brutal massacre against probably the biggest non-violent pro-democracy movement the country had ever seen, at the *Plaza de las Tres Culturas* in Tlatelolco, Mexico City. For at least a decade after the massacre, more than thirty urban and rural armed movements were active in Mexico, with their cadres being mostly students and young people, who had lost any faith in the *via pacifica* towards social change, despite the state's lowering of the electoral threshold and amnesty laws (Castellanos 2007) that followed. Therefore, the horizon of opportunities was already restricted for the youth of that time, with the option of the electoral –or at least non-violent- struggle being perceived as closed. As a prominent ex-member of the FLN of the time responded during fieldwork, but also as Compañero Pedro of the FLN wrote in the very first FLN internal document (FLN 1969), armed struggle was **the only way**, and it was **imposed by the enemy**, therefore the Mexican state. However, what played a crucial role in deciding what road to follow at that moment was the incredible resonance that the Cuban Revolution, which took place only ten years earlier, had among the Latin American

youth, including young Mexicans. The FLN was a typical ’68 generation political organization, inspired by the Cuban Revolution and Castro-Guevarismo and, naturally, critical to Stalinism. Of course they had their own distinctive characteristics that distinguished from the rest of the armed movements of their time (see O’Connor and Oikonomakis, 2015), but their preferred road to social change was the *insurgent route* of the *state power road*, which would lead to the violent conquest of state power. According to their first internal communication document:

“*The fundamental way is armed struggle, however we have to understand that this is not for putting pressure on the enemy; on the contrary, for defeating the enemy totally, absolutely and definitely, removing power from the enemy forever, and utilizing for that reason all the means at our disposal*.” (FLN 1969, 2)

That idea, to the author’s best knowledge, enjoyed the absolute ideological hegemony amongst the FLN militants and its prevalence was undisputed. However, the FLN did not just stay there. They engaged in active investigation regarding that matter, thoroughly studying both older and contemporary revolutionary movements, Mexican and otherwise; a process that strengthened their selected political strategy and secured its ideological hegemony within the group. It is not a very well known fact, for example, that at least one of their militants, Mario Marcos (Adelaido Villafranco Contreras) who also happened to be a very close friend of Subcomandante Marcos, thoroughly studied the case of the revolutionary movement of Arturo Gámiz and the attack on Madera Barracks (Mario Marcos 1981), and tried to identify tactics that would be useful for the armed struggle later on. He was also one of the founders of Nepantla, the internal instrument of communication of the FLN (Grupo Editorial de la Casa de Todas y Todos 2014) and he organized and taught history lessons for the organization (ibid.). Therefore, the choice of political strategy was not a sterile adaptation to the political opportunities available, but on the contrary it was the product of active historical research on behalf of the movement, which generated knowledge that was then passed on to the other members of the

organization through internal publications and seminars. In addition, even though there can be no tangible proof for that yet, it is possible that even the military plan of the *primero de enero* was a product of that research and teaching, since it avoided the mistake of the rebels that tried to take the Madera Barracks: the Zapatistas made an early retreat from the occupied cities of Chiapas.

However, another important factor, not so much for the selection of political strategy but for the later moves of the movement, was the internal leadership change that took place in 1992. Until then, the political strategy of the FLN/EZLN was determined by its urban leadership but had to be implemented by the militants, the vast majority of whom were based in the Lacandona Jungle and were of rural origin. In 1992, however, there was a break with the urban leadership of the FLN, which was reflected upon the decision-making structures of the movement. It is the actual break of the EZLN from its mother organization, its first autonomization, that shifted the decision making body of the organization from the urban centres to the *selva*, from the FLN to the CCRI of the EZLN. It also represents the first attempt to involve the Zapatista communities in the decision-making structure of the organization, with the decision to go to war being taken by the community assemblies. That is a structure that was subsequently developed even further and now characterizes all of the decision-making processes of the Zapatista communities.

That leadership change, together with the fact that the rebellion of January 1, 1994 did not eventually provoke the reaction the EZLN was hoping for – i.e. the resurrection of the Mexican population against the government on the side of the EZLN- gradually led to the shift in political strategy of the EZLN and the indigenous communities towards autonomy. Seeing that the "scale shift" was now impossible, and knowing that the EZLN's organizational capacities were not sufficient for it to beat the Mexican army in pitched battle, they retreated to their communities in the *selva*, on time (unlike the Madera Baracks attack) to consult them. It is at this point that the decision to legitimize the *de facto* autonomy of their communities came about.

The choice of autonomy is not a coincidence. It is rather the effort to advance the institutions the Zapatistas had already started started building before the uprising: new

governing structures, new ways of decision making, and an autonomous health system even. All these were later expanded to become what today we know as *la autonomia Zapatista*.

The Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba/MAS

The *cocaleros* of the Chapare started off from a similar standpoint as the Mexican Zapatistas. They were indigenous peoples (not native to the region though), who lived in a rather isolated region, full of tropical vegetation and difficult-to-traverse rivers, marked by the absence of the state. Therefore, in order for them to survive –and while all possible political strategies were available- they had to self-organize and create their own autonomous social support networks. Both the Chapareños and the Bolivian state treated the region as a newly-colonized land. After all, this is how the first settlers of the Chapare were known: *colonizadores*. They formed their own local institutions and decision-making bodies, and they started building schools, roads, and clinics by themselves. The organizational form they selected was that of the *sindicato*, the agricultural union. Again, what accounts for that choice has to do with the resonance of the 1952 Bolivian revolution, which made the sindicato its flagship and its preferred form of organization, and the fact that the *colonizadores* of the Chapare had direct experience with that form of organization. Therefore, this is exactly what they decided to implement in their new homeland, the Chapare.

As a result they formed their local *sindicatos*, just like they would have done elsewhere in the country in those times, while they also established a loose channel of communication with the Bolivian state. However, there was one difference with the rest of the Bolivian *sindicatos*: those of the Chapare were *de facto* autonomous and had very minimal relations with the official state. Their only obligation –which at the same time was a privilege with a legitimizing effect - was to register the land parcels of the Chapareños with the National Agrarian Reform Service. Therefore, once again what accounts for the Chapareños autonomous first decades in the Chapare has to do more with the political

culture they knew and had been exposed to as a result of the Bolivian Revolution of 1952. Of course, seeing that they could manage their own affairs autonomously, they maintained this distant relationship with the official state for decades, until the state came to violate their relative autonomy.

In 1988 the Bolivian state, in an attempt to regulate the production and sale of the coca leaf in the country, introduced Law 1008, which practically declared the production of coca in the Chapare illegal (with the exception of the Yungas Vandiola). That decision and its repercussions meant that from that moment onwards the relative autonomy the *sindicatos* of the Chapare would be violated. And this is exactly what happened. When the area started to be militarized, and their *cocales* uprooted, the cocaleros tried to protest through marches and all the traditional repertoires of demand-making. They failed, therefore they had to decide what to do next: that is, to make a shift in their political strategy. For that to happen, a serious internal battle for the ideological hegemony of the movement would take place, a battle between those advocating a guerrilla, and those arguing for participation in the elections instead.

The *cocaleros*, inspired by the Zapatista struggle in Chiapas among other things, first thought of the guerrilla as their new political strategy. During fieldwork for this thesis several cocalero *dirigentes* admitted that they were seriously considering armed struggle, they had even thoroughly studied the Zapatista movement and they maintained an archive of Zapatista communiqués. It must be said that this is a novelty in the relevant bibliography. At the same time, another idea that was also resonating amongst a –smaller- part of the cocaleros, and certainly amongst their advisors like Filemón Escobar, was participation in the elections, initially at the local level. The inspiration came from local experience that dated back to the 1940s and has to do with the Thesis of Pulacayo and the participation of the Miners' Unions in the elections of 1947 with the *Bloque Parlamentario Minero*. The success enjoyed by the BPM persuaded the *cocaleros* that this was the way to go: participation in the elections, with their own political instrument, first at the local and –later- at the national level. A long internal battle for the ideological hegemony of the movement had to be fought between these two positions. That battle involved active

teaching through internally organized seminars, organizational calculations, and of course experimentation with the new strategy first at the local level. It is interesting to note that Evo Morales was initially in favour of the *guerrilla* proposal, however, he was later persuaded by the first local electoral successes of the movement to opt for participation in the elections. At the same time , a system of sanctions was established which would ensure the discipline of the grassroots to the decision taken, or at least their silent conformity to it. Of course, the political instrument they established was not established by the Six Federations alone. They had to establish a broad network of, mainly indigenous, social and political organizations (CSUTCB, *las Bartolinas*, CSCB, CIDOB) and thereafter they also had to fight a battle for the ideological hegemony within the political instrument as well. But that is a whole different story. The strategic decision had already been made.

Strategic Choices

So what accounts for the strategic choices of movements? Through what mechanisms are they made? From the research carried out for this thesis it appears that indeed both political opportunities and path dependence do play a role, however not in the making of the movements' strategic choice. They play a role in the sense of limiting or extending the options available, and they can influence the decision making process, however, they do not determine it.

The formation of the political strategy of the movements is a much more complex procedure which involves three phases: that of **selecting potential strategies**, that of **winning the ideological hegemony**, and that of **securing the discipline** of the militants to the decision taken.

Selecting potential strategies: At the phase of selecting potential strategies, whether that came at the initial stage of the movements or not, the movements were influenced by the examples of other -across time and space- resonating cases. Those were historical examples or similar experiences from their own or other countries; from their own or other times. What is particularly interesting is that those historical-or-not examples were studied

in-depth, in a process that sometimes involved even primary research methods such as personal interviews. In the case of Zapatista autonomy, the “example” came from the past experience of the movement itself, which was further developed through prefiguration and trial and error.

Winning the ideological hegemony: Both the movements examined here experienced battles for the ideological hegemony regarding their strategic choice fought internally within them. Those internal battles involved historical research, and even active training on behalf of the fractions of the movement supporting them in order to persuade the rest of the base. Apart from the movement leaders, the organic-or-not-intellectuals of the movements played a critical role in identifying the most relevant strategy from the pool of the resonating ideas, and then transmitting them to the leaders and the grassroots through seminars and the use of propaganda material (internal publications), or active training in a “learning by doing” fashion. In the cases examined, the ideological battles had to be fought at a later stage in the life of the movement, when the moment came to making or not a strategy shift, and in both cases they involved a leadership takeover by a younger generation of militants.

Securing discipline: What remained to be done after identifying the potential strategies and securing the ideological hegemony of one of those within the movement itself, was to make sure that the selected strategy would enjoy the widest discipline of the militants possible. One way of doing that was persuading the militants for the rightfulness of the selected political strategy. The other, combining ideological hegemony with a system of sanctions which involved -depending on the case- from (volunteer, or not) expulsion from the movement, to the removal of land property, or the imposition of fines. The FLN of course, had possibly imposed even stricter sanctions, especially since they were acting in clandestinity, but we do not have enough evidence to be definite about that. It has to be noted that -at least in the case of the Chapare- those sanctions also became a way of imposing an ‘enforced conformity’ to the majority’s decisions. In the case of the Zapatista autonomy, sanctions are not that strict. In case one disagrees with the collective way of self-management of the Zapatistas, they normally leave the organization. However,

there's always the option -as part of the autonomy advocated by the movement- for a community or *Junta* not to participate in certain activities of the movement should they not wish to.

More specifically, when it comes to the initial strategic choice, in both cases this thesis locates the resonance of certain political strategies as they were expressed either nationally (in Mexico and Bolivia respectively), or internationally, which nevertheless were considered "successful." That resonance worked both across time and across borders, and these ideas inspired the movements examined "because the affective claims and struggles of people elsewhere resonate with their own and provide domestic activists with the inspiration to activate dormant potentialities for mobilisation back home." (Roos and Oikonomakis 2014)

What's probably the best definition of this kind of resonance, even though he was not referring directly to that, is the description of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos of the stories that the indigenous peoples of Chiapas were narrating to the first EZLN insurgents at nights while sitting around the campfire:

"…stories of apparitions, of the dead, of earlier struggles, of things that have happened, all mixed together. It seems that they are talking of the revolution (of the Mexican revolution, the past one, not the one that is happening now) and at moments no, it seems that is mixed up with the colonial period and sometimes it seems that it is the pre-hispanic period

Resonance is not enough, however. Both the movements examined here did not stick to pure *adoptation* (Roos and Oikonomakis 2014), of the strategic choices of other movements in their country or abroad. They also engaged in –sometimes primary-research in order to make sure that *this* or *the other* option was the most suitable for them. In the case of the FLN/EZLN that process was undertaken by the movement's militants themselves. The figure of Mario Marcos is very prominent in the process. He is the one who would teach their first indigenous members in the FLN safe houses, who would then in turn go on to teach their own communities. In the case of the Six Federations of the Chapare, political educators like Filemón Escobar would first persuade the *dirigentes*, who would then assist them in organizing mass seminars all over the Chapare and the country

in order to also persuade their constituency. Summing up, at least in the case studies examined in in this research the strategic choice of the movements was made through a combination of; a) across time and place resonance; b) in-depth research of the resonating cases; and c) active training of the movements' constituencies to secure the ideological hegemony of the choice made and the discipline of the militants.

Turning now to the movements' strategy shifts, which in both of the cases I studied was accompanied by a leadership change, again political opportunities and path dependence may or may not limit or widen the strategic options, however they do not determine the movement's choice. To begin with, a strategy changes when it is not considered successful. Or when changing circumstances, a change in the overall political environment, make the previous political strategy inadequate or irrelevant.

However, the strategy change is again dependent on a change in the ideological hegemony within the movement, it is not just an instinctive reaction to the changing circumstances. Once again new proposals have to be made from the pool of resonating ideas; sometimes there is a battle of ideas just like what happened in the Chapare; other times the choice is more rooted in the political practice of the movement itself -when it manages to develop its own form of prefigurative politics, as was the case in Chiapas. In the latter case, prefiguration became a sort of anti-strategy, based on trial and error and on the Zapatista practice of "asking we walk."

In the Chapare, when the relative autonomy of the cocalero *sindicatos* –which it must be noted did not evolve into a project of prefigurative politics - was violated, the movement had to choose what to do next. Two ideas were resonating: armed struggle, and participation in elections, both *routes* of the *state power road*. An internal battle for the ideological hegemony took place and the idea that prevailed was that of participating in institutional politics. In the meantime, a younger generation of militants, some of them sons of the first *colonizadores*, others miners, had taken over the leadership of the Six Federations. Following this the prevalent idea was transmitted to the grassroots through numerous seminars that were organized for that purpose. Strict obedience to the decision taken was safeguarded by a system of sanctions for those who would not obey the general

will. In the Chapare, those sanctions also functioned as a way of silent imposition of the majority's decisions.

In the case of Chiapas, when the rebellion did not transform itself into a nationwide revolution, the movement retreated to the jungles and mountains of Chiapas to decide what to do next. In the meantime, a leadership change had transferred power from the urban revolutionaries that started the FLN to the –largely- indigenous communities and their representatives in the Comandancia of the EZLN, and an effort to transform the FLN into a political party had failed, beaten by the ideological hegemony the armed struggle was enjoying amongst the Zapatistas. At the same time, the EZLN and its support bases had already started the process of forming an alternative autonomous prefigurative way of self-governance. Therefore, when plan A did not proceed, a plan B was put into effect: the EZLN embarked on a campaign to legitimize its hard-won autonomy, either *de jure* or *de facto* as eventually happened. Again –just like the decision to stick on the revolution plan in 1992- the decision was taken by the Zapatista community assemblies, and was centred on safeguarding an already existent political practice that the movement had managed to prefigure.

The main difference between the two cases when it comes to their strategic shift, is that while they both somehow tried through trial and error to implement their preferred strategy, the cocalero case involved experimentation with an already existing institution (party/state), while the Zapatistas had to come up with a new one in a prefigurative manner.

In short, when it comes to the cases of the FLN/EZLN and the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba, the political strategy of the movements were dependent on the prevalence of a certain option amongst the pool of resonating ideas, a prevalence that was the product of in-depth study and –sometimes- even primary research on behalf of the movement. In the cases studied here at least, the final choice made was not an almost instinctive reaction to the available opportunities as the existing theory has us believe. Successful experiences of other movements were used as examples in order to strengthen one or another political strategy (the Sandinista experience for the Zapatistas, or the

Bloque Parlamentario Minero for the cocaleros for example), while "failed experiences" were also used as negative examples in order to discredit the alternative strategy (*Che's* guerilla for the cocaleros, and Allende's case for the FLN). At the same time, a long preparatory phase would begin in order for the grassroots to also be persuaded about the selected strategy. This process involved propaganda material and numerous workshops. This was necessary in order to secure the hegemony of the preferred strategy and the discipline of the grassroots- together with a system of sanctions that was set up.

The POS-ideology interplay

James Jasper (2006; 2004) is one of the few scholars that have made an effort to explore the relationship between opportunities, resources, and movements' strategic choices, beyond the standard POS-Game Theory-Resource Mobilization interplay. In his work, at times together with Goodwin (Goodwin and Jasper 2004b), he also adds, ideology, and movement agency and emotions to the "equation." He also talks of strategic interactions, not of just actions. However he does not –yet- expand his theory to include the mechanisms involved in the making and unmaking of movements' political strategies.

The movements' prevalent ideology, at least in the cases studied here, was not just another variable interacting with varying political opportunities, resources, and strategies, but rather a precondition for the mere existence -or not- of the latter as an option. Gary Downey (1986), studying the Clamshell Alliance, had reached similar conclusions regarding the role of ideology. Just to give an example from one of the case studies examined here, after the Amnesty of 1978 and the new electoral law the choice of armed struggle on behalf of the FLN was clearly an "irrational" one from the perspective of political opportunities. Most other rebels groups of their times had either been dissolved, or had chosen to give up their arms, taking advantage of the Amnesty and entering the "electoral route." Not the FLN, however. What explains this phenomenon is the ideology they had already formed, through intensive work over many years, according to which the electoral route was not an option for "real" social change. How would that change overnight? The same goes for the EZLN just before the uprising. In the crucial meeting of Prado, in 1993,

the actual leadership of the FLN considered that there were no opportunities for armed struggle at the time. The international political context was also extremely unfavourable, especially since the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua just a few years earlier. It even seems that some leading FLN members were in favour of forming a political party. Nevertheless, the communities opted to go for the *via armada* instead. They had been training for it for almost a decade, and according to the political formation they had undergone –largely on behalf of the FLN- they had formed the idea that armed struggle was an absolutely realistic option. According to some accounts (Cedillo 2010; Gunderson 2013) that fact even led to a split and a leadership takeover, although this was denied by Fernando Yáñez Muñoz in a recent interview with the author.

The same goes for the Six Federation of the Tropic of Cochabamba in Bolivia. From an outsider's perspective, it would seem absolutely logical that the Six Federations opted for forming a political party just after the introduction of Popular Participation Law. The sequence of the events even points in this direction: the Popular Participation Law was introduced in 1994, and the political instrument of the *cocaleros* (and the Bolivian *campesino* movement) was formed a year later, in 1995. However, if we take a closer look we will see that the discussions and the plans for the creation of a political instrument had already begun in 1988 - 6 years before the introduction of the Popular Participation Law- and the political training of the *cocalero* grassroots in that direction had already begun through hundreds of workshops all over the Chapare and the country as a whole. We can therefore argue that the *cocaleros* certainly took advantage of the favorable political opportunities, but they had already been prepared for it for years before –and not as a result of- their appearance.

The argument of this thesis regarding the changing POS-ideology interplay, therefore, is that movements that are ideologically inclined towards a certain political strategy, have a long preparatory period and propaganda work behind them, and are disciplined enough, are not very likely to switch to a different political strategy overnight, just opportunistically reacting to changing political conditions. This happens because the ideological preparation of the movement itself becomes a filter through which to assess

whether newly opened opportunities are an option or not, and whether closing opportunities are restricting the movement's strategies or not.

The role of organic/external intellectuals

As we have seen in this thesis, of vital importance in the formation of the movements' political ideology and the selection –or change- of their strategies, was the role played by the movements', organic or otherwise, intellectuals. They are the ones who carried out the relevant research in order to identify the most suitable strategy for the movements at each historical period. They are also the ones who tried to propagate their chosen strategy to the support bases. At the same time, they also had to counter opposing strategies that also used historical examples, counter-arguing with them and -at times- trying to discredit opposing strategies and historical examples, thus legitimizing their own views in the present. As Wickham-Crowley emphasized back in 1993 (1993, 32), some ideas (additions to the movements' repertoires he calls it) can dominate the conscience collective as to squeeze out of consideration all other competing responses.

In both cases studies examined here sooner or later a struggle for ideological hegemony evolved, which marked the movements' choice of political strategy. In this process, the role of the movements' intellectuals was crucial, because it was them who persuaded the leaders and the support bases of the movements of the rightfulness of their selected strategy. There was one difference, however: in one of the cases examined (FLN/EZLN), the intellectuals were internal to the movement, which was also preoccupied with forming its own *organic* –in a Gramscian manner- intellectuals as well. In the second case study (*cocaleros*), the intellectuals that played a prominent role were external to the movement, while the movement itself was not particularly preoccupied with forming its own ones.

The FLN/EZLN, from the very beginning of their struggle were very much preoccupied with the political and ideological formation of their cadres. From the very beginning, they embarked on an explorative –scientific, as they call it-investigation in order

to identify the political strategy that would best fit their cause. Through the work of the movements' leadership, but also that of its highly educated cadres like Mario Marcos, they selected the strategy of the revolutionary uprising and they propagated it to the support bases through long and intensive preparatory means that took various forms: publications clandestine and less clandestine, workshops, even active formation of their youngest cadres –especially the indigenous members- that involved even more basic skills like language courses (Spanish), mathematics, reading and writing, as well as more practical skills like shoe-making and use of guns. They also utilized their youngest, indigenous members as trainers of their own communities, an action they fulfilled using their own distinctive linguistic and cultural capacities (speaking an indigenous language for example) on top of the political formation they had acquired thanks to the work of the FLN/EZLN.

The *cocaleros* on the other hand, as Fernando Mayorga once pointed out to the author in an interview, were not particularly ideological in the beginning of their struggle. They became so when the state (under U.S. influence) violated the relative autonomy they had until then managed to enjoy in the Chapare. Nor were they particularly preoccupied with the political formation of their members. They were mostly interested in establishing their semi-autonomous self-governance system through the practical participation of their support bases in the communal works, and the acceptance of the *sindicato* as the highest administrative authority in the region. When the time came for them to react, and while the resonance of the Cuban revolution and the Zapatista uprising weighed heavily in the region, it was the turn of external –to the movement- intellectuals to advise them, and of course subsequently influence them towards one or another direction. Intellectuals of the miners' movement like Filemón Escobar, as well as more radical proposals promoted by members of the EGTK that also enjoyed a presence in the region were involved in this process. In the "war" for ideological hegemony within the *cocaleros*, those *ideologos* utilized mostly methods that were based on the spoken word, like workshop presentations in the *sindicatos*, while -no matter what political strategy the movement would eventually select- the discipline of the support bases was already secured also through a system of sanctions.

Even though we cannot be sure whether that played a role in the actual eventual selection of their respective political strategies, one of the main differences between the Zapatistas and the cocaleros of the Chapare is their stance towards the dominant system of economic relations within their countries/territories. According to Eduardo Silva (2005,3) the cocaleros/MAS played a protagonist role in a cycle of protest (2000-2005) that was largely against the neoliberal economic model that was dominant in the country at the time, but was not -however- against capitalism in general:

“It is crucial to underscore that these episodes of anti-neoliberal mobilization in South America (Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador) protested a specific kind of capitalism, not capitalism in general. The dominant protest movements sought to reform neoliberal capitalism, demanding a return to the mixed economy and a larger welfare role for the state, rather than to replace it with an alternative "socialist" or other model.”

Even though there was a rhetoric that sounded radical, revolutionary, and at times anti-capitalist, and even though there were elements that were seriously contesting capitalism as an economic model and not just neoliberalism (the *Coordinadora* of Cochabamba for example), the majority of the demands were in fact against capitalism in its extreme form, neoliberalism that is, and not against capitalism in general. The cocaleros of the Chapare were not very different. As we have seen earlier in this thesis, their political strategy was decided upon with a view to controlling the territory in which they were operating first, and at a later stage the whole country. Their main demand was the right to cultivate, consume, and of course sell the coca leaf. Around that demand they built a rhetoric of multi-culturalism, in which the indigenous people’s customs (including those involving the coca leaf) were at the forefront. Of course they were deeply anti-imperialist, mainly due to the fact that it was under U.S. pressure that the Bolivian government decided to start the “hunt” against the coca leaf, as well as because they were identifying themselves with past indigenous struggles like those of the Kataris, in which resistance to imperialism was central. In that environment, the cocaleros decided to turn the coca leaf and the *whipala* into ethno-nationalist symbols, that could reach out beyond their limited sectoral interests and could be embraced by wider sectors of the Bolivian society finding this way allies outside their direct territory (Durand Ochoa 2014). This way they managed to build a whole ethno-nationalist project around them which would demand the inclusion of the indigenous Bolivians and their culture into the state structures. As a natural step, the nationalization of natural resources was of course included in their demands, as well as in the MAS’ electoral program, however those were not the priorities within the

cocalero movement itself. Neither had they ever formed an anti-capitalist ideology through their training: what they actually demanded was to maintain the right to cultivate and sell their product, and they were deeply embedded in -capitalist- national and international market relations. After all, that is exactly why they were not viewed as the ideal subjects of revolutionary change by Bolivian revolutionaries like the EGTK for example. As a result, the practices they developed and the policies their government eventually came to implement, did have an anti-neoliberal and radical rhetoric however they did not have an anti-capitalist content: the multinational companies never left the country to give one example; the state simply demanded higher royalties than those it was receiving before (J. Webber 2014). Nor was the *Pachamama* really protected in Bolivia. Despite Evo's rhetoric, neo-extractivism of natural resources is still promoted and facilitated by his government. After all, the economic model the MAS has been advocating is that of *Andean-Amazonian* -but still- *Capitalism*, which would has assisted a -previously ignored- considerable part of the population of indigenous background to become the new bourgeoisie (J. R. Webber and Carr 2013, 169). This absence of capitalism from the cocalero struggle is so, because the cocaleros had not developed any particular anti-capitalist ideology over the years, neither were the seminars they were organizing focused on that, therefore they had not formed such a political consciousness.

On the other hand, both the FLN and the EZLN have always been anti-capitalist projects first and foremost. Of course, they have also been anti-imperialist like other Latin American movements of their times, but their anti-imperialism, in contrast to that of the cocaleros, also had an anti-capitalist ideological dimension. The FLN formed their political strategy keeping in mind that what they wanted to achieve was to overturn capitalism and install socialism in Mexico. And the best way they thought this would be done, was the Revolution. The EZLN now, both in their rhetoric and in their praxis were not only anti-neoliberal, but also deeply anti-capitalist. That is clearly depicted in the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle as it has been analysed earlier in this thesis, but it is also reflected in the labour and economic relations within the Zapatista autonomy. In contrast to the cocaleros, in Zapatista controlled territories there is collective "ownership" of land and resources. Of course each family can still maintain her own parcel (which always remains part of the *ejido*) but there is also a collective parcel, which is worked collectively, and the gains from which are used to finance other Zapatista projects (autonomous education, health, etc.). The same is the case for the Zapatista cooperatives; part of the income generated from them goes to their members, while another part is used to finance the Zapatista autonomy. At the same time, while in the cocalero *chacos* there are owners and workers (*peónes*, sometimes coming from the Yuracaré peoples or from other regions of Bolivia) and clear capitalistic exploitative labour relations, the Zapatistas work their own

parcels of land by themselves and the collective owned land and their cooperative projects collectively. In addition, when it comes to the autonomous projects of health, education, and politics for example, the positions the *promotores* occupy are not salaried positions, building this way anti-capitalist working relations amongst the Zapatistas themsleves. Of course, money is still present even in Zapatista autonomy, mainly when it comes to obtaining goods from the non-Zapatista world, that cannot be produced or manufactured by the Zapatistas themselves, as well as when it comes to Zapatista goods that are distributed through solidarity economy channels worldwide. Again in the latter case, the gains are used to finance the Zapatista autonomous projects.

Prefigurative Politics

When it comes to the internal organizational structure of the movements, the main difference is the prefiguration that was involved in the politics of the Zapatistas **after** they decided to walk the lonely road of *de facto* autonomy. A factor that is not visible in the case of the *cocaleros* even when they established their own autonomous structures in the beginning of their colonization of the Chapare, or when they decided to walk the electoral route. That is so because in both cases they tried to build structures modelled on institutions they were already familiar with (*sindicatos*, political parties). The Zapatistas on the other hand chose to form new institutions, not based on any pre-existing structure.

Both movements, in the beginning of their struggle had quite determined ideas on how to proceed strategically speaking, ideas that were mainly based on their own previous or contemporary experiences, or those of other national and international movements that inspired them. When the FLN decided to walk the *via armada*, they based their organizational structure, with bigger or smaller variations, on the hierarchical models of other similar revolutionary experiences that had inspired them. Cuba, the GPG, the Sandinistas, among others, became successful role models for them. At the same time they criticized more reformist strategies like those of Allende for example, which they also considered as “destined to fail,” based on the Chilean experience. Those models were part of their long and extensive training, and assisted in safeguarding the hegemony of their chosen political strategy amongst the grassroots, which also meant a higher discipline to

the movements' decisions. Now, when they shifted to their lonely autonomous road, they based their new political strategy and practice partly on previous experiences of their own this time, which also involved a great deal of prefigurative politics and organization that was built step by step, "while walking" as they Zapatistas would put it. While it is true that their form of autonomous self-governance has borrowed certain characteristics from the indigenous Mayan traditions, like that of communitarian assemblyism, it cannot be denied that those traditions (largely macho and hierarchical) were also transformed by the Maoist influence (participation of younger members and women) as well as that of the EZLN, later on. And of course, Zapatismo, and the *autonomia Zapatista* as we know it today, is a product of the creative prefiguration of the BAEZLN communities.

The *cocaleros* on the other hand, started as a de facto autonomous movement, however their case involved much less prefiguration and was mostly based on the organizational model of the *sindicato* that was hegemonic in Bolivia after the Revolution of 1952. However, when they decided to shift to the electoral route, they based their strategy on the experience of the *Bloque Parlamentario Minero* of 1947, while to counter the guerilla arguments of parts of the cocalero movement, the failed guerrilla experience of *Che* -the prototype of Guerilla failure as Wikcham-Crowley calls it (1993, 16)- was used as a counter-example among others.

Therefore, it seems that while both movements made extensive use of past political experiences to strengthen their political strategy arguments (or weaken that of their ideological opponents), and when it came to "creating" a new strategy that was not there and for which there was practically no past experience to build upon, the Zapatistas came up with a great deal of prefigurative capacities that –in their own turn- have become exemplary for other movements of other parts of the globe years later.

What goes around…

The experiences of both the movements I am examining have in their own right become exemplary for the selection of political strategy of other movements that

succeeded them time-wise speaking in other parts of the globe. At the time this lines are being written, the experience of the cocaleros/MAS is being discussed as an example by *Podemos* in Spain for example; with some influential intellectuals of the party having actually thoroughly studied the Bolivian experience. The Zapatistas on the other hand have long been a point of reference for autonomous movements all over the world and keep doing so. In an ironic twist of fate, these movements have themselves now been used as examples and counter-examples in the battles for ideological hegemony by other movements elsewhere on the planet. I hope that this thesis will also make its own contribution to social movement theory and practice, highlighting the mechanisms through which revolutionary movements' political strategies are formed.

ANNEX I: List of Interviews

Mexico

Due to field-specific restrictions, my research in Mexico and Chiapas relied mostly on extensive political ethnography that was conducted in different time periods between 2011 and 2015 (see methodology). I did not conduct any formal interviews with the only exceptions being the ones listed below:

John Holloway, interview conducted on 24 August 2013 in Puebla, Mexico

Gaspar Morquecho Escamilla, interview conducted on 19 August 2013 in San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico

Cesar Yáñez Muñoz, interview conducted via email on 24 May 2016

Bolivia

Alejandro Almaraz, interview conducted on 01 October 2013 in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Alejandro Rios, interview conducted on 29 November 2013, in Shinahota, El Chapare, Bolivia

Asterio Romero, interview conducted on 02 October 2013 in Cochabamba Bolivia

Carlos –Chalie- Crespo, interview conducted on 24 October 2013 in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Dario Mendoza, interview conducted on 29 September 2013 in Entre Rios, El Chapare, Bolivia

Federacion de Productores de Coca Organica de Yungas Vandiola, focus group interview conducted on 04 november 2013 in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Feliciano Mamani, interview conducted on 05 October 2013 in Villa Tunari, El Chapare, Bolivia

Fernando Mayorga, interview conducted on 17 August 2013 in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Filemón Escóbar, interview conducted on 23 October 2013 in Cochabamba, Bolivia

José Luis Colque, interview conducted on 23 September 2013 in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Julio Llanos Rojas, interview conducted on 09 September 2013 in La Paz, Bolivia

Justina, interview conducted on 10 October 2013 in Eterazama, El Chapare, Bolivia

Leonardo Marca, interview conducted on 09 September 2013 in Chipiriri, El Chapare, Bolivia

Margarita Terán Gonzales, interview conducted on 29 September 2013 in Cuatro Esquinas, El Chapare, Bolivia

Miguelina Villaroel, interview conducted on 27 September 2013, in Lauca Ñ, El Chapare, Bolivia

Oscar Olivera, interview conducted on 23 October 2013 in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar, interview conducted on 10 October 2013 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico

René Jiménez, interview conducted on 29 September 2013 in Entre Rios, El Chapare, Bolivia

Ronald Corini, interview conducted on 12 September 2013 in La Paz, Bolivia

Vitalio Montaña, interview conducted on 10 October 2013 in Eterazama, El Chapare, Bolivia

ANNEX II: Internal Organizational Documents Consulted

Comunicados de las FLN:

-Primera Comunicación, La Dirección de las F.L.N., 31 Agosto 1969

-Sobre la militancia , Compañero Pedro (1969)

- Comunicado Confidencial: EIM, Companero Pedro, Marzo 1970, Libro FLN

-Comunicado Confidencial a cada red local: EYOL, MArzo 1970, Companero Pedro, Libro FLN

-"A todos los militantes", Compañero Manuel, Agosto 2 1971

-Faltan paginas, Compañero Pedro, 6 de Agosto de 1971

-Homenaje a Che", El Compañero Pedro, 8 de Octubre de 1971

-Comunicado Confidencial, Diciembre 1971, Compañero Pedro, Libro FLN.

-Comunicado Confidencial, 6 Agosto 1972, Compañero Pedro, Libro, FLN

"A todos los militantes", Compañero Pedro, 6 de Agosto de 1973

-A todos los responsables de cada red local, y "Visperas del 14 de Febrero de 1975",La Direccion de las FLN, Febrero de 1975

-"Sobre las órdenes", F.L.N., Dic 31/1975

-"Martires de Nepantla", La Dirección de las F.L.N., Febrero 1976

-"Evocación del C.Mario Sanchez Acosta", , La Dirección de las F.L.N., Junio 10 1976

-"Recuerdo del C. Salvador, Alfredo Zarate Mota", Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional, Ago. 5/76

-“Recuerdo de Deni Prieto Stock”, F.L.N., Septiembre 8, 1976

-“Recuerdo de la Compañera Aurora, Julieta Glockner Rossainz, Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional, Oct./1976

-“Anniversario de la muerte de Che Guevarra”, Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional, Oct. 8, 1976

-“Justicamiento de Napoleon y Nora”, Compañero Segundo Responsable Alfredo, Mexico, 1976

-“ Recuerdo de Graciano A. Sanchez Aguilar, Gonzalo”, Fuerzas de Liberacion Nacional, 31 de Diciembre de 1976

-Faltan paginas, F.L.N., febrero 7, 1977

-“A todos los Militantes de las F.L.N.”, F.L.N.. 14 Febrero de 1977

-“El siguiente paso es el mas dificil”, La Dirección de las F.L.N., Julio, 1977

-“Fundación de las F.L.N.”, Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional, 6 de Agosto de 1977

-“A todos los militantes de las F.L.N.”, Faltan paginas y fechas

-“A todos (en la nepantla Ano II numero 9) , Dirección Nacional de las F.L.N., Marzo 22, 1980

Nepantlas

-Año I, numero I, 15(?) de Enero de 1979, pag1-.3

-Año I, numero 4(?), 18 de Julio de 1979, pag.1-20

-Año I, numero 8, 27 de Diciembre de 1979, pag. 1-54

-Año II, Numero 9, 15 de Marzo 1980, pag. 1-72

-Año II, Numero 10, 4 de Junio de 1980, pag. 1-63

Conciencia Proletaria

-Año 1, Numero 1, Septiembre-Octubre de 1979

-Año 1, Numero 2, Noviembre-Diciembre de 1979

-Año 1, numero 3, Enero-Abril de 1980

Documentaries consulted

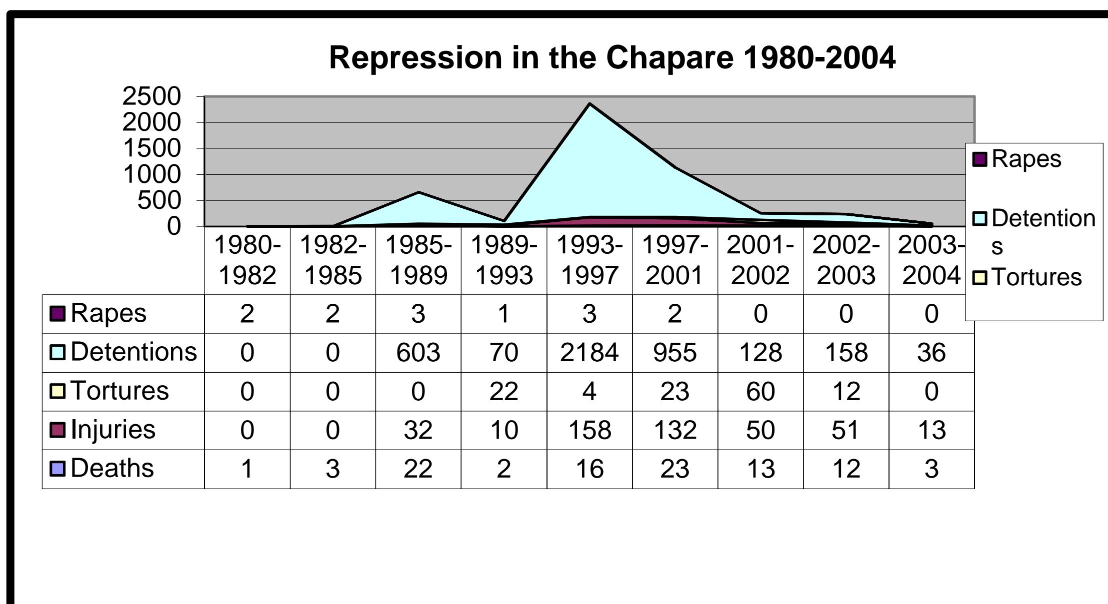
"Flor en Otomi", Directed by Luisa Riley. 6 March 2012. Icarus Films. Documntary on the life and death of Dení Prieto Stock.

ANEX III: Repression in the Chapare

Year	Deaths	Injuries	Tortures	Detentions	Rapes
1980-1982	1	0	0	0	2
1982-1985	3	0	0	0	2
1985-1989	22	32	0	603	3
1989-1993	2	10	22	70	1
1993-1997	16	158	4	2184	3
1997-2001	23	132	23	955	2
2001-2002	13	50	60	128	0
2002-2003	12	51	12	158	0
2003-2004	3	13	0	36	0
Total	95	446	121	4134	13

Table :Combined data from Salazar Ortuño et al. (2008) [124]

[124] Sources according to the authors: People’s Defensor, Ministry of Justice, Bolivian Military and Police Files, data compiled by researchers, and national press.



	1980-1982	1982-1985	1985-1989	1989-1993	1993-1997	1997-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Rapes	2	2	3	1	3	2	0	0	0
Detentions	0	0	603	70	2184	955	128	158	36
Tortures	0	0	0	22	4	23	60	12	0
Injuries	0	0	32	10	158	132	50	51	13
Deaths	1	3	22	2	16	23	13	12	3

Year	Coca grower fatalities	Coca growers injured	Coca growers detained	Police and army fatalities	Police and military injured
1997	5	65	135	2	6
1998	9	62	171	4	19
1999	0	0	82	0	0
2000	2	72	47	10	10
2001	7	193	88	0	5
2002	5	145	66	5	69
Jan-Aug. 2003	5	30	104	6	26
Total	**33**	**567**	**693**	**27**	**135**

Source: Chapare Human Rights Ombusdman's Office, January 2004 (Ledebur 2005)

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