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Accounting for the Different Levels of Success Between the EZLN and the EPR

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Beginning in the 1980s through the end of the 2000s, Mexico was undergoing a time of rapid and significant change to its role in the increasingly globalized economy. In 1983 a debt crisis resulted in the Mexican State to accept loans from the IMF under the conditions that it focus on liberalizing trade relations and that it restructure its economy to better fit into the global economy. Five years following the initial loans, Mexico was undergoing a second debt crisis caused by its failure to restructure the economy in the manner stipulated by the IMF. In an effort to rebuild its image on the global scene the Mexican State began a process of restructuring which included the privatization of the majority of state owned companies, a reversal of land reforms and the liberalization of labor markets in an effort to attract foreign multinational corporations, to the detriment of Mexican workers. In 1994 when another economic crisis hit the Mexican State, the IMF and the US Treasury stepped in with 50 million dollars to bail out the Mexican economy under the condition that it joined the North American Trade Association (NAFTA). This resulted in a process of further privatization and deregulation of previously State owned industries, as well as the destruction of many local economies throughout Mexico (Laurell 2015).

What new industries that did begin to appear following NAFTA were focused on the export of assembled products to the US and were concentrated on the US-Mexico border (Laurell 2015). Because these industries were mostly concentrated on the border region, compared to Northern Mexico, Southern Mexico was left underdeveloped resulting in higher levels of economic inequality. The communities that were hit hardest by this underdevelopment were

agrarian peasants communities that now needed to compete with the US in the cultivation of staple crops like maize and beans (Laurell 2015). Peasant communities that were largely indigenous were particularly vulnerable because of a history of neglect and indifference by the State towards its indigenous population that went back to the colonial period.

It was during this period that the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), the ruling party since 1929, was beginning to face legitimate threats to its control of the State. The multiple debt crises suffered in the 1980s and 1990s were threats to the legitimacy of the State and neoliberal reforms were implemented in an effort to address these threats and maintain control. There existed growing discontent from Mexicans frustrated with the illusion of democracy that resulted in a lack of accountability for any actions taken by the State. This manifested itself prior to 1983 in different forms, like the student protests of 1969 in Mexico City, but any social or civil discontent were repressed and efforts to enact change often failed.

However, beginning in the middle of the 1970s, a social movement focused on advancing indigenous rights and autonomy was able to emerge and survive despite efforts by the State to repress and co-opt it (Gasparello 2018). Indigenous communities began to organize around this movement, with the help of institutions like the Roman Catholic Church, and began the process of establishing a counter-hegemony in indigenous communities by working on improving the quality of life for these marginalized communities. These efforts were centered in Southern Mexico, the region with the highest population of indigenous people and the highest levels of poverty in Mexico (Illades 2008). The poverty in the region was only exacerbated with the State's pursuit of neoliberal policies resulting in the conditions that would make it possible for the State's legitimacy and control in this region to be seriously challenged.

It was under this context and conditions that two different groups emerged that would directly challenge the State and the influence and control that it held. The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) and the Ejército Popular Revolucionario (EPR) emerged in 1994 and 1996 respectively as a response to the exacerbated poverty from neoliberal politics and frequent use of force by the State on the marginalized peasant communities. The EZLN published its first document in 1994, coinciding with Mexico entering NAFTA, and declared war on the State with the support of indigenous communities in the rainforests of Chiapas. The group participated in guerilla warfare against the State and was able to maintain control of a sizable territory of Chiapas despite efforts by the State to repress and put down the rebellion. The EZLN was able to eventually begin negotiations with the State in 1996 that, although did not result in agreement between the parties, was able to establish the EZLN as a legitimate organization.

Contrastly, the EPR emerged two years after the EZLN as a response to the 1995 murder of 17 campesinos in Aguas Blancas, Guerrero. The campesinos were protesting to demand better access to social services and programs but were repressed by the State. The EPR timed the publication of their first communique with the anniversary of this massacre and like the EZLN declared war on the State. What differed between the two groups, however, was the EPR's declaration that they existed to keep the option of armed rebellion alive, in the context of the EZLN peace talks with the State. It took up arms against the State attacking military and police bases in Guerrero and later expanding into different states like Oaxaca and Chiapas. This group like the EZLN was met with State repression but unlike the EZLN it was not able to maintain

control of any significant piece of territory in Guerrero or any other state. Even in 2008 when the EPR became more willing to negotiate with the State more than a decade after it emerged, it was not met with a willing State, resulting in the EPR to remain classified as a clandestine terrorist organization.

Both Chiapas and Guerrero had similar conditions and were some of the southern states that were most negatively affected by the implementation of neoliberal policies. The two states were already some of the poorest in Mexico and it was only made worse by the implementation of neoliberal policies that ignored southern Mexico. Both Guerrero and Chiapas had some of the highest rates of poverty, lack of education and public health, with rural indigenous communities being the most vulnerable to these effects. Because of how similar these two states that the EZLN and the EPR emerged in were, the trajectories of each group are interesting because of how different they are. The question then emerges: Why did the EZLN and the EPR experience different levels of success from their emergence in the mid 1990s through the end of the 2000s despite the fact that they emerged in similar conditions as armed guerilla movements?

Existing literature on the subject seems to mostly be focused on factors that contributed to the success of the EZLN. The way that civil society in Chiapas influenced the foundations necessary to support the EZLN has been an area of research that has had much attention paid to it. For example, the role that the Roman Catholic Church played helping to organize indigenous communities in Chiapas, resulting in the emergence of networks of indigenous communities has been well documented (Trejo, 2009; Diaz, 1998). Not only this but the role of indigenous organizations, that emerged from the Indigenous autonomous movements of the late 70s and early 80s, in organizing rural communities has similarly been documented (Castillo, 2006;

Veltmeyer, 2000). The legacy and traditions established by such organizations were significant in that it provided the EZLN a sort of framework on how to interact with the indigenous communities that it would come to rely on. The political philosophy of the EZLN has also received significant attention with analyses of the works published by Subcommandante Marcos, the mouthpiece of the movement, that look at the influence that indigenous communities have on shaping the EZLN's rhetoric and tactics (Berghe & Maddens, 2004).

Contrastly the EPR has not been as well researched and documented as the EZLN but nonetheless there still exists previous literature on the EPR and its history. There has been work done on the ties that the EPR had to previous guerilla movements in Guerrero and how these movements influenced the political philosophy of the movement (Lofredo, 2014). A comparison between the EPR and the EZLN's differing philosophies has also been undertaken in the past, however, the comparison is dated, being published in 1999, and was not able to take into account all the different documents published by the EPR that were not as widely available compared to the EZLN's documents (Bruhn, 1999). Literature on different groups in civil society that existed in Guerrero prior to the EPR's emergence has not been as comprehensive compared to the work focusing on the EZLN but some attention has been paid to the role that nonviolent organizations played in rural communities compared to the EPR (Martinez Zaval, 2015). In addition to this some of the work that analyzes the conditions and groups that existed in Guerrero have not included the EPR in their focus, potentially excluding any significant factors that affected the success of the movement (Kyle & Yaworsky 2008; Yaworsky 2005).

What also seems to be missing from the existing work done on these two movements are more direct comparisons of the conditions that made the emergence of these two groups possible.

Comparisons between the two movements are often done in passing and do not take into account much more besides the potential differences in political philosophy and the different strategies pursued by the two movements. Even when looking at the differences in tactics and philosophy much of the existing literature does not pay attention to how the different conditions that existed in Chiapas and Guerrero might have influenced what philosophies and strategies were adopted. It is possible that these different conditions could have potentially motivated the State to respond differently to each movement.

This thesis will attempt to fill in the gaps left by the literature by arguing that the difference in the degree of success experienced by the EZLN and the EPR can be explained by differences in civil society in the states of Chiapas and Guerrero, the states in which the two movements emerged respectively. Examining the role that groups like the Roman Catholic Church, Non Government Organizations and other nonviolent movements had on the civic culture of Chiapas and Guerrero will provide insight on how seemingly similar states could have produced radically different results for each movement. Similarly the difference in the way that the two movements communicated their messages, be it through radio, newspapers, or internet, along with the strategies and tactics adopted by each group will help to better explain why the State behaved the way it did towards each movement.

It will also be necessary to take into account the historic, socio-economic, and political contexts that made it possible for these movements to emerge and gain support from their respective bases. These movements did not occur in a vacuum and to fully understand each movement, it is important to understand the processes that resulted in the necessary conditions for the emergence of each movement. By understanding the differences that existed between

these two movements and the role they played in the level of success experienced, it could be possible to gain insight on why certain social movements succeed and others fail.

Chapter 2: The Importance of Revolution in Mexico

To better understand the emergence and significance of the EZLN and the EPR it is important to understand Mexico's history of revolution and the significance that this has had on the culture and politics of the country. The relationship between this past and these movements is made apparent even when looking at the EZLN's name. By naming itself after a key revolutionary from the Mexican Revolution of 1910, Emiliano Zapata, the EZLN has also connected itself to the revolutionary ideas associated with Zapata. Zapata's call for "Tierra y Libertad" (Land and Liberty) rallied the peasant communities from his home state of Morelos and helped to propel Zapata as a key revolutionary figure during the Mexican Revolution. Zapata himself was eventually killed by the Mexican government following the end of the revolution when he was assassinated in an ambush in his home state of Morelos.

Despite this the memory of Zapata and the Revolution as a whole remained an integral part of the Mexican national identity following the decade long conflict. Zapata and the Revolution would be used by conservative and radical parties alike in an attempt to establish legitimacy in the eyes of the Mexican people. In this way both the EZLN and the EPR are two movements situated in a long tradition of revolutionary imagery being used to evoke the emotions and images associated with the Mexican Revolution.

In the decade following the end of the Mexican Revolution there was a need on the part of the Mexican State to establish its legitimacy so that the events of the revolution would not

repeat themselves. The first steps that were taken by the post-revolutionary State was to centralize the power of the State. What this meant was establishing a larger presence in the peasant rural communities through the use of federally funded schools, enacting limited land redistribution through the central government, and the establishment of monetary and financial institutions (Stephen 39). The centralization of power was significant not only because it was necessary if the State wished to survive the aftermath of the revolution, but also because it meant that it would be able to more effectively craft a vision of national unity more aligned with its interests. By doing so the State would also be able to more effectively extend its hegemonic control to the entirety of Mexico helping to ensure stability by co-opting potential threats to its control.

One way that manifested itself in postrevolutionary Mexico was through the gradual decline in land granted to peasants through the ejido system. Ejidos were lands that were collectively owned by peasant and indigenous communities that were further divided into individual holdings that could not be sold (Nuijten, 48). Although ejidos were being granted by the central government, the existence of communally held lands posed a problem to Mexican elites that wished to stimulate the investment of foreign and national capital in Mexico. As a result the number of expropriated ejidos decreased from 956,852 hectares in 1925 to only 289,933 hectares in 1927. Not only this but in largely indigenous states like Oaxaca, petitions made by peasants for land were regularly denied and there was an emphasis placed on the rights of landowners over the rights of peasants by the Mexican government (Stephen, 40). The rhetoric and land reform that echoed the ideals of the Revolution seemed to have been only a means by

which the State was able to extend its control to parts of Mexico that might have been more unwilling to comply with its vision of material growth.

This vision was not met without its challenges however, and threats to the expansion of centralized power were still present. The largest of these challenges to State power took the form of the Cristeros rebellion from 1926-1929, a violent guerilla movement that resulted in the deaths of over 100,000 people (Young, 69). This movement was a response to anticlerical sentiment and laws found in the Mexican Constitution. Church lands were placed under the complete control of the State, denied legal status to the Catholic Church among other efforts to reduce the role the Catholic church had in Mexican society. Members of the clergy were met with persecution and between 1926 and 1929 up to 2500 members of the clergy were either deported or fled the country. The State also took part in the removal of local and religious leaders in many peasant communities that had already been negatively affected by the gradual decrease in the ejidos granted by the State. In response, tens of thousands of peasants rose up in armed rebellion against the State and although it was ultimately unsuccessful, the rebellion proved to be a major threat to the legitimacy and financial stability of the Mexican State (Stephen 40). What this demonstrates is that for the peasant communities that were involved in the Cristero Rebellion, the Church was still an integral part of not only their identity but also to their notion of political autonomy. This is significant because the importance of the Church in creating a sense of political autonomy would return in the 1970s when a focus on indigenous autonomy began to emerge.

In 1929 a new political party would take control of Mexico, the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR), that wished to bring an end to the instability still present in the 1920s

through the use of revolutionary images (Hernandez Rodriguez, 19). This would continue into the 1930s becoming more explicit with the rise of Lazaro Cardenas to the presidency in 1934. In order to establish a national culture founded in the Mexican Revolution, the central government promoted images of the revolution through the use of murals and education throughout rural Mexico. The campaign by the State was in an effort to legitimize itself as the true successor to the revolution (Stephen 42). The government also took a more concerted effort in promoting land reform once again connecting itself with the ideals of the revolution in order to support the nationalist vision of the State. Revolutionary figures like Zapata were made into national symbols and the image created by the State often did not coincide with the historical figures. People like Zapata were sanitized in an effort to gain the support of the people. The image of Zapata that was created by the State would be the image that would endure throughout the 20th century as a protector of the peasantry and as a martyr figure while still attributing any progress to the State (Stephen 48).

The State was not successful however in spreading this image of Zapata to the entirety of Mexico and certain regions such as the Lacandon Jungle in Chiapas would not incorporate Zapata into their cultures until later in the 20th century (Stephen 50). What this demonstrates is that the State's efforts to create a national character among all Mexicans, although very far reaching, was still not able to fully extend its hegemonic into the entirety of the country. Because of this it became possible for areas that had not been fully integrated into this hegemony to begin to create counter hegemonies that were able to utilize the imagery and rhetoric of the revolution in ways not consistent with the State's vision. This was demonstrated by the use of revolutionary rhetoric by communities in both Oaxaca and Chiapas to petition the State to resolve any issues

regarding their land. The Union Zapata based in Oaxaca for example wrote Cardenas directly on multiple occasions to not only resolve their petitions for land but to influence from where the land was to be redistributed by utilizing the revolutionary language promoted by the Cardenas regime (Stephen 55). The importance of this rhetoric and imagery for rural and indigenous communities is made clear here as it provided a framework to address any issues that might have previously been ignored.

The PRN would reorganize itself into the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM) in 1938 and later into the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in 1946 making sure to retain the language of the revolution into the name and rhetoric of the party. The foundation that was laid in the 1920s and 1930s by the different governments in connecting the State with the revolution were instrumental in the emergence of a one party state in Mexico. The legitimacy that was built through revolutionary rhetoric and imagery only helped to strengthen the centralization of power that began shortly after the revolution. The use of the schools throughout rural Mexico and the constant promise of land reform through the central government helped to build the hegemony of the State making it more difficult for groups to resist the State. Although there did exist challenges to the State as seen in the Cristero Rebellion and resistance to the hegemony by communities that would co opt the language of revolution to advance their own causes, they were either put down or confined to regions that were more isolated from the rest of the country.

When the PRI was constituted in 1941, it remained in control of Mexico until 2000 when the Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) took control of the presidency. Because of this the PRI played a critical role in determining the trajectory that Mexican development took in the years

leading up to the emergence of the EZLN and the EPR. It was the PRI after all that pursued the neoliberal policies that would result in the emergence of both groups. The decisions that were made during its leadership will need to be closely analyzed if one wishes to understand the failures and successes of each movement in the broader context of Mexican history.

Chapter 3: General Mexican Development

The decades preceding the emergence of the EZLN and the EPR were a period of Mexican History known as the “Mexican Miracle” which was characterized as a period of rapid economic growth and development. What made this economic development from 1940-1970 possible was in part the foundation established by the PRN in the 1930s. During that time large portions of the Mexican population were integrated into the party that would become the PRI and divided into 4 main sectors. These sectors were workers, peasants, the middle class and the military (Langston 1). What this meant for the party, and by extension the State, was that it was more able to centralize its control over different sectors of the country that might have conflicting interests. In doing so the risk for political instability was reduced and the increased stability helped to increase the amount of foreign capital that was donated into Mexico. ¹

It was beginning in the 1930s and extending through the 1960s that there was a significant demographic shift occurring throughout the country that resulted in an increasingly urbanized society. In 1930 the population of Mexicans living in rural areas was 66.5% compared to the 33.5% of the population in 1960 (Hamnet 323). Why this is significant is because it indicates that the rural peasant that was once at the forefront of revolutionary rhetoric was becoming more and more irrelevant to the Mexican economy and as a result any concerns or issues pertinent to this group would be largely ignored. The decline in the importance of peasantry can be seen more concretely when one looks at how the percentage of the GDP the primary sector, which includes agriculture, changed from 1910 to 1979. In 1910 the primary

sector accounted for 24% of Mexico's GDP. By 1955 this percentage had dropped to only 12.1% of the GDP, and it dropped even lower by 1979 when it accounted for only 8.69% of the total GDP (Rodriguez 53).

The 1930s were characterized by a period that was heavily influenced by ideas central to the Mexican Revolution like land reform. During the decade there was an increase in the use of populist rhetoric in order to invoke the spirit of the Revolution. There was an effort on the part of the State to organize or co-opt worker and peasant organizations such as the Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) in order to garner support among these groups. The support that the State gave to workers and peasants wasn't simply rhetoric as there was support for not only strikes but for revolutionary land reform as well (Babb 53). This however was not the reality for the entirety of the decade as the period from 1930 to 1934 were characterized by attempts to abandon support for the ejido, collectively owned land, system as well as pulling support for labor movements. This came as a result from the Calles regime that had been in power behind the scenes since 1925 but with the election of 1934 a Lazaro Cardenas was elected as the new president, one who advocated for the peasantry and the workers (Babb 53). The election of Cardenas was significant because it signified that although the Revolution was two decades removed, the ideas that inspired people to revolt were still very influential ideas.

The Cardenas regime undertook revolutionary new land reform that stressed the importance of the ejido over individual property holdings. What was a significant departure from previous regimes that implemented limited land reform, was that the holdings of large landowners were redistributed. Cardenas's reform was also much more substantial than his predecessors with peasants receiving more land under Cardenas than the previous two regimes

combined (Babb 53). This was an action that seemed to go against the mission of economic growth and development that would come to characterize the presidencies of his successors in the 1940s. In addition to this economic development did not seem to be at the forefront of Cardenas's agenda, instead focus was placed on political decisions that increased support for the Cardenas government. Despite this, Cardenas did pursue certain economic policies that would establish a precedent in which the State would intervene into the economy. One such policy that was pursued was the nationalization of industries such as the railroad system in 1937 and the petroleum industry in 1938. The state would also participate in public works projects that aimed to stimulate industry. The central bank was strengthened as well and during the end of the Cardenas regime the foundations for the tax and tariff exemptions characteristic of later economic policies would be pursued in the upcoming decades (Babb 54). These actions taken by the regime were significant in helping to define the role the State would have in pursuing economic intervention and only helped to strengthen and centralize the authority of the State.

These actions would also foreshadow another aspect of Mexican development that was central to the vision promoted by the ruling party, economic nationalism. Despite this the State still sought out foreign investment as means of developing Mexican industries resulting in the needing to reconcile seemingly conflicting goals. This task would become even more difficult as the nationalization of Mexican oil resulted in the British government cutting diplomatic ties and resulting in economic hardship (Park 116). This meant that it was crucial that new opportunities for foreign investment be created in order to avoid further economic hardship. There also seemed to be a shift in Cardenas's platform, near the end of his presidency in 1940, away from the support for workers and land reform that characterized his early presidency. Instead Cardenas

began to try and slow down the revolutionary spirit of the nation by discouraging strikes, slowing down land reform, and advocating for peaceful reconciliation between any conflicting interests (Park 118). By working to discourage the more radical policies, once advocated by his regime, Cardenas helped to encourage foreign and national investors that benefited from Cardenas's changing perspective.

Another way that foreign investment was encouraged was through the centralization of the electoral process in 1940 following an especially violent and corrupt election. The Commission of Electoral Supervision was created in 1940 and gave the central government the right to administer elections, a right previously belonging to the states. In the lead up to the election of 1940 the Cardenas government began to try and weaken the political power of the Mexican military which posed a threat to the stability brought by the regime. This is because a presidential candidate and former military zone commander, Juan Andreu Almazan, had begun to attack the legitimacy of the Cardenas regime and attempted to rally support from the military. The election process would be a violent one with several assassination attempts made on Almazan along with a number of other violent incidents (Park 136). Following the election, the results would be announced a month early by the State and they would show that Almazan's opponent, Avila Camacho, had one in a landslide. This was a controversial result that resulted in Almazan fleeing the country and eventually returning (Park 137-138).

The significance of this election is not only that it would signal the start of a peaceful time in Mexican history known as the "Pax PRIista" but it would also signal a period in which the democratic process would be suspended as future presidents would be chosen by the party in secret (Hamnet 326). Despite the failure of Almazan's attempts to become president, it

represented a significant development that would alter the vision and mission of the State going forward. It was a conservative backlash to the populism characteristic of Cardenas's presidency. He was able to draw support not only from the military but groups like northern industrialists, fascists, and anti-communist labor movements as well (Schryer 96). It was partly because of this reaction that leaders would no longer heavily rely on the promise of land reform to gain support as it no longer worked to the advantages of officials who wished to retain power (Schryer 99).

In addition to this, despite the majority of the country being composed of workers and peasants², these voices would largely be ignored in favor of policies thought to accelerate economic development. An example of this was in 1946 when large estates were divided into "small private holdings." Although this initially might seem like a continuation of the policies of land reform common in the 1930s, in actuality these "small" holdings were becoming increasingly larger and seemed to serve the interests of those in power rather than the workers or peasantry (Hamnet 326). There continued to be a centralization of power throughout the 1940s with the State beginning to invest in infrastructure throughout the country and by increasing the amount of social spending in accordance with economic growth. The State would also become increasingly involved in national industries in the late 1940s, and in 1947 import quotas and licenses were introduced in an effort to protect local industries (Hamnet 329).

During the Post War period many Latin American countries including Mexico began to base economic decisions on a theoretical framework provided by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) that argued economies based on the export of raw materials and the import of finished goods must cease. The ECLA promoted policies focused on developing national industries through protectionist policies and protection of salaries to increase

and maintain domestic demand. The ECLA argued that these types of policies were necessary because the previous model that relied on the export of raw materials would only serve to inhibit the growth of wages and of internal markets (Babb 76). This framework for economic development gained quite some traction among Mexican intellectuals and up until 1973 the Mexican economic journal *Trimestre Economico* included leading theorists from the ECLA on its editorial board (Babb 77). Despite the intellectual influence that the ECLA was able to exert, Mexican economic policies, although often in line with the ECLA's agenda, were not as influenced by the ECLA. This was in part because unlike organizations like the IMF and the World Bank, the ECLA was not able to provide financial resources to the State and therefore did not want to sacrifice any autonomy (Babb 77). This sort of framework was also predicated on the concept of class cooperation and national unity; a position similar to the image of national unity advocated by the Mexican state during the period following the revolution.

Beginning in the 1940s there began to be a decrease in government rhetoric focused on land reform and socialist education that had been characteristic of the Cardenas regime in the 1930s. In place of this rhetoric there was an attempt by the State to improve relations between the United States and Mexico, and internally between the State and the private sector. The State began to protect private landholding from expropriation while simultaneously developing the infrastructure structure to promote private investment in the country despite the protest of labor unions (Babb 78). What this indicated was that the State began to shift its policy even further from the original ideals that motivated the Mexican Revolution. In doing Mexican economic interests became more closely aligned with that of the United States while at the same time the State attempted to counterbalance this by developing its own industries through increased private

investment. As a result, Mexico was placed on a trajectory that would come to rely economically on the US more and more that would, in part, help to motivate the emergence of the EZLN and the EPR.

The economic policies that the State pursued were focused on achieving economic growth at the expense of increasing inflation. This was because although the State increased its expenditures during this period, there were no increases in taxes to offset this increased spending resulting in inflation to increase during this period that resulted in average GDP growth of over 5% between 1940 and 1954 (Babb 78). During this economic growth the real wages of those in agricultural and nonagricultural sectors suffered while the incomes of private investors continued to increase (Hansen, 50). This is especially striking because during this same period the manufacturing and agricultural industries were growing at yearly levels averaging around 8% for the former and 7.4% for the latter (Alba & Potter 49).⁴ These sectors were significant for the increasingly urbanizing society as they provided food, raw materials, and consumer products that helped to fuel further economic growth all at the expense of those working in these sectors. This once again demonstrates the commitment of the State to pursue economic growth and capitalist development while neglecting groups that were a necessary part of the national identity that gave the post-revolutionary State its legitimacy. This pattern would only continue as the State pursued economic development which would help to motivate future movements like the EZLN and EPR which were able to channel feelings of alienation and resentment that had its roots in this neglect.

One way that economic growth in the agricultural sector manifested itself was through massive efforts by the State to subsidize the commercial farming industry. There was large scale public investment on the construction of highways and on the development of

irrigation networks throughout the country. The efforts on the part of the State were so expansive that between the period of 1941 and 1964 the number of districts designated government irrigation districts, land that was opened to cultivation, increased from about 500,000 hectares to 2.1 million hectares. In addition to this, the total amount of irrigated land increased from 1 million hectares to 4 million hectares (Alba & Potter 52). Although this development of irrigation systems greatly contributed to the growth of agriculture, they were largely focused on five northern states: Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, Sonora, Baja California, and Chihuahua. This meant that while these northern states shifted their trajectory away from the peasant economies that were still predominant in Central and Southern Mexico (Alba & Potter 52). This is significant because it meant that a process of uneven development where Northern states were able to benefit from State intervention, while the Central and Southern states were neglected.

In addition, there was a significant difference in not only the types of crops produced, with mostly beans and maize in the south, and wheat and sorghum in the north, but in the types of technologies utilized by each. In the north the use of heavy machinery and chemical fertilizers was common while the peasant farmers did not have access to such technologies and often relied on unpaid family labor (Alba & Potter 52). What this demonstrates is that in its pursuit of economic development the State not only neglected a certain region of Mexico but actively invested heavily into another region with similar industries. By neglecting economic development in the south of Mexico, the State helped to reduce its influence in the south; something that would make the region more susceptible to the emergence of resistance movements later in the century.⁵

Agriculture was not the only industry that saw massive amounts of State intervention as there was a significant increase in investments to the industrial sector in the form of investments to transportation, communications, electricity, oil, iron and steel. By doing this the State hoped to help the process of urbanization that would result in increased production. In conjunction with public spending in industry, that comprised nearly 30% of public investment, the State encouraged investment from industrialists by implementing tariff protections, tax exemptions, subsidies, and pressure to labor movements, among other protections for domestic industry (Alba & Potter 52-53). Because of this the State was able to create conditions that were favorable to the growth of domestic industries in a way that did not coincide with improvements to the quality of life to workers. The State was able to achieve its objective of increased urbanization as these policies made it so that between 1940 and 1970 the amount of people living in urban centers increased from 4 million to 22 million (Alba & Potter 53). The implications of this are that while urban centers continued to grow, the rural peasant community would only become more neglected. This is because with investment into commercial farming and into urban industrial production, the peasant communities were quickly becoming less significant to Mexican economy.

Another consequence that emerged from the increased urbanization during this period was the increase of workers that were unable to benefit from labor protections, healthcare, social security, education and housing because they belonged to the informal economy. These social services were restricted only to those who were employed formally and were members of unions which resulted in the meager wages for their labor. In addition to this, the State was able to protect small scale producers by not enforcing the minimum wage which only served to

exacerbate the issue of low wages further. However, the State would still provide basic services such as rent control and subsidies for food like tortillas and beans (Alba & Potter 54). By doing so the State positioned themselves as part of the solution to the problems of the people, despite the fact many of these problems arose from the consequences of policies pursued by the State. This allowed the State to not only continue its pursuit of economic development but to also spread its influence and control over the people.

In the 1940s and continuing into the 1950s with the start of the Korean War, demand for Mexican manufacturing increased, but when the war had concluded by 1954 demand had decreased once again and economic opportunities declined (Ramirez 41). What this resulted in was a devaluation of the Peso in 1954 and signaled a new approach by the party in its goals of economic development. From 1954 the party pursued low inflation rates and stable exchange rates while also attempting to control the public expenditure and the money supply (Hamnet 331). What this meant was that more foreign capital would be necessary if development was to continue as it had been in the past.

The State would also continue to pursue some protectionist policies in an effort to develop national industries, but continued growth meant that these policies were becoming less sustainable. The growth of the industrial sector required that machinery and equipment be imported to help to further development (Ramirez 43). There was also a continued focus on manufacturing and more policies were implemented throughout the 1960s that focused on facilitating the growth of exports and the growth of foreign investment. One such policy was the implementation of tax subsidies on the import of raw materials needed for export industries. In addition to these subsidies, there was also a fund created that utilized revenue from import tariffs

with the intention of providing aid to export industries. Finally, the State, in addition to private institutions authorized by the State, also began to provide low interest loans to top exporters (Ramirez 43). These policies helped to increase the amount of exports of manufactured goods from 12.6% during the late 1950s to over 40% at the start of the 1970s. Despite this impressive growth, it was not able to offset continued increase of imports as both consumer goods and as necessary equipment for production (Ramirez 44).

The 1960s also marked the growth of the amount of State debt and of how prevalent private financial sources had become. During the period between 1960 and 1975 the amount of external public debt as part of Mexico's GDP grew from 9.7% to 24.4%. This was debt that was taken on by the State directly or through guarantees provided to private institutions on the part of the State (Ramirez 44). What this indicates is that in order to continue the levels of economic growth experienced in the preceding decades the State would have to become more and more indebted while private institutions continued to profit. In addition to this, between 1965 and 1970 the amount of private debt originating from banks, most of which were located in the United States, made up 50% of all private debt in the country (Ramirez 45). This once again demonstrates another step in Mexico's economic development in which it becomes more closely tied with the financial interests of the United States.

During the period between 1952 and 1970 there had also been a steady increase in the average wages in the country but economic growth began to slow in the second half of the 1960s (Rodriguez 54). Between 1964 and 1967 for example there began to be a decrease in wages in the manufacturing industry and by 1967 it had fallen 25%. This issue was made worse by stagnation in the agricultural sector that only helped to exacerbate the issue (Hamnet 339). What

this indicated was that the Mexican economy was unable to maintain itself any longer. The State needed to secure more funding from the US in order to maintain the high level of spending that had marked the period of economic growth. This meant that the United States' influence over the Mexican economy would continue to grow in an effort to sustain continued economic growth.

The 1960s also saw the rise of challenges to the control that the PRI had exerted on the state and on the ideology of the Mexican Revolution that was still a central part of the State's legitimacy. These challenges manifested themselves as the 1968 Student protest movement in Mexico City and were significant in helping to dispel the official image of the revolution as a true social revolution that was beneficial for everyone in Mexican society. The lack of true substantive democracy in Mexico was one of the prime motivators for the student movement, an issue that would continue to motivate anti-state movements in the following decades. What initially triggered the protests was an act of police brutality on a university campus against two students that were having a dispute. In response to a violation of the autonomy of the University, students began to protest this act of state sanctioned violence (Sloan 173).

Despite these protests, the State largely ignored the movement as it didn't seem to be a significant threat to the PRI's control. As the protests continued however, the students were met with violence by riot police as a cycle of protest and violence would develop. The failings of the central government were the center of these protests and the students situated themselves within the revolutionary tradition central to the Mexican identity promoted by the government (Sloan 175). This is significant because it marks another occasion in which the revolutionary rhetoric is appropriated by marginalized groups to further their goals while calling into question the national identity created by the central government. Because of the threat that these continued

protests posed to the legitimacy of the Mexican government, the government would attempt to delegitimize the student movement by accusing it of being composed of foreign agitators attempting to destabilize the country (Sloan 175).

While this was occurring the government also took part in efforts to utilize revolutionary nationalism to present Mexico as a stable industrial state to the world as it prepared to host the Olympic Games in Mexico City. These attempts resulted in continued protests which resulted in further clashes with government forces. The government began to worry that if the protests continued, they would negatively affect the country's image and could result in a decrease in financial investments for the games. What this eventually culminated in was a massacre of student protesters on October 2 1968 that would signal the end of the student movement (Sloan 178). By doing so the government ensured that the Olympic Games were able to continue as planned but, it also resulted in the legitimacy of the PRI to be called into question. The massacre at Tlatelolco would help to motivate future movements that could use it to illustrate the disparity between the PRI's vision for Mexico and what that would entail. Despite this PRI still maintained control of the government and would continue to enact its economic vision for Mexico into the next decade.

The 1970s saw the central government attempting to take a more active role in addressing growing inequality and agricultural development. It would attempt to more evenly distribute economic growth by utilizing government resources to help disadvantaged segments of the population that had been ignored during the period of economic growth (Alba & Potter 60). There was an increase in public investment in agriculture as well as an increase in protections for industrial wages, expanded welfare, and attempts to reform the tax system. There was some

initial success but it would not be sustained because efforts to reform the taxation system failed resulting in less government revenue while public spending continued to increase from 12% of the total GDP at the start of the decade to over 20% by 1976. This resulted in an increase of foreign debt during the same period as it increased from 4 billion to 22 billion dollars. Not only this inflation had reached 24% by 1974 along with an increase of capital flight further indicating that Mexican economic policy was no longer sustainable (Pansters 39).

In addition, income and wealth inequality, that had begun to grow as a byproduct of the rapid economic development, was rapidly rising during this same period. National income was increasingly concentrated among the top 20% of the population while it continued to fall for the bottom 40%. In 1968 the bottom 40% represented 10.7% of the national income while the top 20% received 58.1% of the national income (Ramirez 50). The income distribution was already highly unequal but it would only continue to worsen as the decade went on. The distribution of the national income in 1975 makes this point clear with the bottom 20%'s share decreasing to 7.5% while the top 40%'s share had increased to 62.5% (Ramirez 50). What this indicates is that the "Mexican Miracle" had not come without a cost. The tremendous amount of wealth that was generated by the economic programs pursued by the government was increasingly concentrated among elites while large portions of the population continued to grow poorer. Not only this, programs designed to address inequality were also proving to be too costly and the reliance of the Mexican economy on the US and foreign institutions would only continue to grow.

In the years leading up to this, there had been a continued increase to the annual rate of growth of the money supply from 7.5% in 1921 to about 25% in 1974. In addition, real yields on both financial bonds and deposits became negative (Ramirez 52). These issues only became

exacerbated as the rate of public expenditure was not reduced resulting in a continued increase to national deficit. This can be observed in the year between 1975 and 1976 where public sector debts had increased from 1679.9 million dollars to 3053.8 million dollars. Because of this and the continued failure to increase exports, the Bank of Mexico was not able to keep up with increasing debt and its reserves deteriorated (Ramirez 52). All this helped to exacerbate economic insecurity that resulted in an increase in capital flight. Ultimately, the increasing economic stagnation resulted in the devaluing of the peso, that had been fixed since 1954 at 12.5 pesos for 1 dollar, to 20 pesos to one dollar in 1976 (Pansters 38). There was also a decrease in public spending, under the direction of the IMF, that helped to stabilize the economy from 1977 to 1978. This would not last however as the discovery of 40,194 million barrels of gas and oil were discovered in 1978 which resulted in a sharp increase in public spending. Policies aimed at stimulating the growth of the petrochemical and capital goods were pursued by the government and by 1981 Mexico's GDP increased at a rate of 8% a year (Ramirez 54).

However, despite the economic development that the new oil reserves brought, there began to be consequences that would largely go unaddressed by the government. There began to be an over dependence on the revenue generated by the country's energy reserves. Between 1979 and 1981 the share of total exports that oil exports represented would increase from 43.9% to about 75% (Ramirez 54). This is significant because by over-relying on oil exports, the Mexican economy was now more dependent on the value of oil and would be vulnerable to economic crisis if the value experienced a sharp decrease. In addition, the central government would continue to heavily borrow from foreign sources while also monetizing government debt to fund its spending. The Central Bank's claims on the government increased between 1976 and 1982

from 134 billion to 2.1 trillion while public foreign debt also increased from 8 billion to 60 billion in the same period. The results were that once again Mexican development proved unsustainable as inflation continued to grow while a global recession and deteriorating oil prices resulted in another economic crisis similar to that of 1976. (Ramirez 54). As a result, it was clear that changes in the Mexican economy needed to occur in order to prevent similar outcomes from occurring in the future.

A restructuring of the economy would begin to more fully integrate Mexico into the global economy and secure more investments and loans from the United States as well as an adoption of IMF policies in a much larger capacity than previously had been seen. In addition to this, the central government began efforts to nationalize the banking system in order to better control financial policy. The changes took place starting in 1982 when blame was placed on the banking industry by the government for its role in the financial crisis by contributing to the outflow of capital from Mexico into the United States (Ramirez 55). Though the goal was for the Mexican government to increase its influence and control over the Mexican economy, by the end of the same year that the bank system had been nationalized, 34% of the nationalized assets were resold to the public in a manner that ensured only the already wealthy would be able to purchase them. By doing so the former bank owners once again were able to exert their influence in this system (Ramirez 56). This is an important note to consider because it indicates another instance of the Mexican government centralizing its power in an effort to stimulate economic growth, while ensuring that Mexican elites were the ones to benefit from this growth. This can be seen further through the implementation of an IMF austerity program in the same year that resulted in the public spending to be drastically cut in an effort to reestablish an equilibrium in the Mexican

economy. These efforts were successful in lowering the inflation rates from 98.2% in 1982 to 65% in 1984 while also managing to record a \$5.5 billion surplus (Ramirez 56).

Although the austerity measures seemed to be working as intended, the consequences of drastically reducing public spending began to be felt by the Mexican public. One way this manifested itself was in rising unemployment as almost 1 million workers lost their jobs between 1982 and 1983 as well as declining industrial production dropping by 9% in just a few months in 1983. Real average wages also were affected hard by these measures dropping 26% in the years between 1991 and 1983 (Ramirez 56). All this seems to indicate that once again economic development took precedence over the well-being and standard of living of the common Mexican.

This period also marked the beginning of a neoliberal transition in which the State pursued a guaranteed source of revenue in the form of the US. This period marked an increase in the manufacturing of goods to export to the US. In between 1970 and 2001 the percentage of exports increased from 33.3% to 85% (Rodriguez 55). The Mexican economy began to be more heavily tied to the US economy as the State sought out more investment to attempt to recapture the economic growth that marked the earlier period of time. Maquiladoras (assembly plants) were the factories that produced the majority of the goods for export and these plants were often tied to foreign investment. 80% of the goods produced in these plants were destined for the United States while economic stagnation began to take hold in the country (Rodriguez 55). There is a wide array of products that were produced by the Maquiladoras including mundane items like broomsticks to military equipment such as torpedoes (Iglesias-Prieto 127). A consequence of this production however has been the environmental damage that can be attributed to the

Maquiladoras. While the products produced by these plants end up in the United States and other parts of the global north, the toxic waste that is often produced remains in Mexico. The reason for this is that the lax environmental policy is often a motivator for companies to focus production in Mexico, as a result local populations were left to deal with the environmental consequences of these plants (Iglesias-Prieto 126). Because the goal of the Maquiladoras was the export of goods into the United States they were largely concentrated along the US-Mexican border, further contributing to the neglect of economic development in southern states like Chiapas and Guerrero. The 1980s continued the trend of economic stagnation that had begun in the previous decades with the average GDP growth during the decade consisting of only .2%. With the continued stagnation came the continued decrease in wages, lack of job security and outmigration into the United States. The decade also marked a shift in the sectors to which foreign direct investment (FDI) was being directed. In 1980 80% of the FDI was focused on industry while only 8% was focused on the service industry. The banking industry also began to be increasingly controlled by foreign capital (Rodriguez 55). Once again this indicates Mexico's increasing economic dependence on the United States while the quality of life continued to deteriorate for the average Mexican. The economic conditions only worsened in the 1990s and culminated in a crisis in 1995 in which the minimum wage lost 51.1% of its purchasing power (Rodriguez 54). The 1990s would also see the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. There would be debates in the years leading up to the implementation of this free trade agreement that would result in increased trade liberalization with the United States and Canada. The goal in implementing this agreement would be to create the largest trading bloc in the world where any barriers to trade and investment would be

eliminated. In addition, it sought to create equal treatment for foreign investors within the trading bloc by eliminating foreign investment rules and regulations (Ramirez 865). The hope was that this would greatly increase the amount of trade as well as an increase of foreign direct investment in Mexico while also increasing the credibility of the Mexican economy in its efforts to support free trade. There was however pushback from communities within Mexico such as peasant communities and labor unions that argued that the implementation of NAFTA would contribute to a further erosion of labor and environmental standards in Mexico but despite these concerns the Mexican government signed the agreement in 1993 (Ramirez 864). Because the Mexican government did not acknowledge the concerns many Mexicans had over the consequences of NAFTA instead focusing on the promise of economic growth that the stage would be set for opposition against the Mexican government. The implementation of NAFTA on January 1, 1994 would coincide with the EZLN declaring war on the Mexican government with the EPR following suit soon after.

It was under these worsening conditions that the EZLN and the EPR were able to emerge as a response to the priority that foreign investment and the United States were given over the marginalized communities of Mexico. Moreover, the shallow attempts by the State to open the political system followed by the same pattern of voter fraud demonstrated that the interests of those in power had not significantly changed and the need for genuine political participation was still unmet. This pattern of Mexican development helps to demonstrate why it was possible for two guerrilla groups were able to declare war on the State only two years removed from each other. A country in which economic stagnation, where the political process still remained closed for the vast majority of the population and where the focus of economic development began to be

more and more associated with the United States became a breeding ground for political and social discontent. One last aspect will need to be analyzed before the different outcomes of the EZLN and the EPR can finally be examined. That is the constellation of the conditions specific to each group that led to its emergence.

Chapter 4: Conditions in Guerrero and Chiapas

The conditions present in the two states in which the EZLN and the EPR emerged, Chiapas and Guerrero respectively, are as important to understanding the emergence of these two movements as the conditions of the whole nation as a whole. These are two states located in southern Mexico. As discussed in the previous chapters, this region had been historically neglected both culturally and economically by the central government, leading to conditions that made the emergence of these movements possible. The effects of these policies were not the same throughout the whole of Mexico and as a result it will be important to more closely look at how Chiapas and Guerrero were not only affected by the decisions of the central government but what decisions were made by the state governments that led to the emergence of these two movements.

Since the colonial period Chiapas has had a history of indigenous communities struggling against the dispossession of their land by large landowning elites, as well as the Catholic Church. This history of resistance continued into Mexican independence from Spain in 1821, as well as Chiapas formally being annexed by Mexico in 1824 (Mazzei, 30). It is important to understand this because it indicates that indigenous communities throughout Mexican history in this state have been the subject of injustice by the hands of the central government and elites that held significant influence in the state. Even following the revolution when more radical land reform policies were being pursued by the central government under presidents like Carranza and later Cardenas, which implemented laws seeking to limit the amount of land that could be owned by individuals, there was resistance from wealthy landowners who wished to protect their influence and land. As a result there were counterrevolutionary groups called Mapaches formed by the

landowning elites, that enlisted the peasants to combat the reforms. The use of guerilla tactics resulted in land redistribution that had been occurring throughout the rest of Mexico to not be implemented in Chiapas and the land owners were able to retain significant power and influence in the region (Mazzei 31).

This is significant because it indicates that during the period following the revolution, in which the central government was focusing on centralizing its power, it was not able to extend its control over this region. In addition, it also indicates that the central government would need to change its approach with Chiapas if it wished to more effectively centralize its power. It also demonstrates that guerilla tactics and resistance against the federal government did not appear suddenly in 1990s Chiapas but rather that it has its roots in the government's attempts to exert its influence over the state.

One way that these attempts manifested themselves was through attempts to co-opt local elites by the PRI by granting local concessions to elites while simultaneously passing federal land reforms. The results of this was a cycle of implementing land reform on the federal level in order to appease peasant populations and maintain popularity while at the same time empowering local landowners by significantly slowing the process of land reform. In the 1930s for example, federal land reform was significantly slowed in Chiapas by intentionally making it difficult for peasants to actually receive land while local officials began to grant certificates to landowners protecting them from the redistribution of land. Local elites also began to receive financial benefits from the federal government in exchange for their support of PRI officials in the Chiapas state government (Mazzei 33). In addition, the elites were able to control which of their properties they wished to sell to the government as a part of land redistribution, with elites

often only selling lands at the margins of their properties at inflated prices (Howard 361). What this meant was that although the PRI was able to find support from the local elite, they were not able to reduce their power which meant that the government was dependent on their support in order to maintain control in Chiapas.

Another important factor to consider is that because the federal government was reliant on the support of local elites it would often turn a blind eye to violence against peasant and indigenous communities. This was demonstrated in the 1950s when the governor of Chiapas created the *Cuerpo de Policía Auxiliar Ganadera*, a police force whose objective was to prevent squatters from occupying land, despite squatting on the land being one of the only ways for peasants to be granted titles to land. The violence against peasants didn't only occur through official capacities however, and during the same period landowners would hire private forces to accomplish similar goals (Mazzei 33). The violence against these communities demonstrated the central government's reliance on the support of local elites through the inaction of the central government. By not acting the federal government only reinforced the power of these local elites while once again demonstrating that the peasant populations were of little concern to it.

This was further reinforced following the second world war when timber demands increased and there was an increase in logging in the Chiapan rainforests by American firms. This went against rules established by the Constitution that prohibited foreign ownership of Mexico's natural resources. For example, one American company called Vancouver Plywood was able to own a territory of 600,000 hectares by 1949 without any issue from the Mexican government (Howard 362). By allowing this company and companies like it to take advantage of the natural resources, the government was once again sending a message that the interests of

foreign investors took precedence if it meant economic development. The increase in the logging industry also meant that there was an increase of migrants that wished to take advantage of the new labor demands. Because much of the best land in central and coastal Chiapas had been reserved for the local elites, many of these migrants were pushed into the Selva Lacandona where they began to come into competition with not only the private companies but the government as well over the wood and land (Howard 362).

The growing communities needed the timber for heating and cooking while there was also a need to clear sections of the rainforest to create land for cultivation. In response to increasing pressure from local elites the federal government granted a small community of Maya Lacandon 634,000 hectares of the rainforest with the assumption that it would be easy to secure the logging rights from them in 1972. The other communities living within the forest were then ordered to relocate or to leave which was met with resistance and protest that eventually resulted in more titles being granted to other communities (Howard 362). This is important to note because it indicates that despite the pressure from local elites, the local communities were still able to resist the federal government in ways that resulted in success for these communities.

Despite this there were still relocations of families by the government in an effort to continue logging activities while there also continued the repression and violence towards peasant communities by local elites and by the state government. The creation of the Guardias Blancas in 1961 had made the use of private security forces legal and they had continued to repress peasant communities as well as remove people occupying land much like the Cuerpo de Policía Auxiliar Ganandera had throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Mazzei 34). There also continued to be active resistance to the repression by peasant organizations and indigenous

organizations during this period in response to the various injustices against these communities. During the 1970s there were various movements that attempted to address these injustices through legal means with limited success. The focus of these movements was often the recuperation of communal lands from the landowning elites and as these movements began to see success there also began to be a repression of them. Leaders of the movements were often targets of harassment and assassination attempts (Harvey 302). When one leader was assassinated in 1975, calls for violence against the landowners were made by other activists resulting in the house of one landowner to be burned down and his lands seized. In response to this violence the Mexican army was sent in and around one hundred people were arrested (Harvey 302-303).

The significance of the army being sent in to put down this uprising indicated that the federal government would no longer be viewed as a neutral entity that could help to resolve land disputes. Another result would be that there would be the emergence of organizations that sought to organize networks between various different peasant communities that could serve a base of support. One such organization was the Organización Campesina Emiliano Zapata, Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization (OCEZ), which formed in 1982 that would be able to take advantage of the networks created by activists in the 1970s to pressure the government with not only legal action but with the political mobilization of these communities (Harvey 309).

There also began the development of indigenous movements during this same period with 1974 seeing the development of the Congreso Indígena, an event organized by an organization called the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, National Indigenous Institute, (INI) in conjunction with the Dioceses of San Cristobal. The purpose of this event was for the various different indigenous groups living in Chiapas to come together and discuss problems affecting their communities such

as the continued land disputes and repression by the government (Gasparello 103-104). This was a significant event because although the problems that the Congreso addressed were specific to Chiapas, they reflected larger structural problems found throughout the entire country. In addition, the event provided an opportunity for indigenous communities to reflect on their cultural identities without having the Mexican government's ideas about national identity being superimposed on them. As a result this event would become an important moment in the organization of communities based on shared experience of being indigenous in a country that had actively been trying to reduce indigenous identities to a relic of the past.

It was under these conditions that the EZLN first formed in 1983 as a clandestine organization when another guerilla organization called the Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional (FLN) set up a permanent camp in Chiapas. This was originally a Marxist Leninist organization but what distinguished the EZLN from other similar organizations was that instead of primarily focusing on military operations, this movement began to focus on political activities. In addition to this the movement took on a more indigenous characteristic in Chiapas as a result of the activity of indigenous groups in the state. As violence and repression continued the movement was able to amass more support and it began to undergo a transformation from a revolutionary vanguard party into an organization that was more interested in helping the network of communities that began to form the base of its support (Gasparello 118-119). As the decade continued the EZLN continued to utilize the networks created by other organizations to amass more and more support and on January 1st 1994, the day that NAFTA came into effect, the EZLN declared war on the Mexican government and its neoliberal policies.

Guerrero, like Chiapas, has played an important role in resistance movements since the time of Mexico's independence, to the post-revolutionary period. During the post-revolutionary period, the federal government struggled to consolidate its power in Guerrero similar to what it had experienced in Chiapas. Power in Guerrero was largely held by the landowning elites that ruled over their respective territories in a semi-autonomous fashion and just like in the case of Chiapas the central government found it necessary to negotiate with these regional elites in an effort to try and consolidate its power in the region (Martinez Zavala 79). This meant that once again the federal government would need to make concessions with the regional elites regarding issues like land reform while simultaneously using the rhetoric of the Mexican Revolution to legitimize itself in the eyes of the peasantry. When land reform did occur during the Cardenas presidency it largely consisted of infertile land and despite this many of the land owning elites saw themselves as victims. Northern Guerrero in particular saw much of the land redistribution where nearly 100,000 hectares of land was appropriated. There was a violent response by smaller land owners resulting in the violence against those in favor of agrarian reform (Illades 125).

Violence by the Mexican military in rural Guerrero would become the norm in the following decades as a way for the Mexican government to exert its control over the region. This violence would insight protests from different sectors of the population including labor movements in the 1950s and civic protests in the 1960s which in turn would insight more violence by the Mexican government (Aviña 138). The violence would only be made worse by the Mexican war on drugs would escalate beginning in 1948 with the "Great Campaign," a program designed to eradicate the opium poppy and marijuana cultivation and continue up through the 1970s (Aviña 139). The EPR would emerge as a response to not only the continued

use of violence on the rural campesinos that the government justified through the war on drugs, but to the economic policies that focused development in Northern Mexico while neglecting Southern States like Guerrero as well. The conditions present in the state as a result of the government's actions and inaction in addressing issues like systemic violence laid the foundation for guerrilla organizations to form as the EPR had not been the only movement to arise out of these conditions.

Chapter 5: Strategies and Tactics

In order to understand why the EZLN and the EPR experienced different levels of political success experienced by each movement the strategies and tactics that were adopted must be understood as they will largely inform how the Mexican government will react to each movement. The differences in the ways that these movements communicated their messages through the different uses of media, as well as the differences in where they chose to focus their efforts can be used to in part explain why the EZLN has had more success than the EPR. By looking at the ability for these two movements to effectively communicate their message and ideas as well as their focuses the movements would have differing levels of success in providing counter narratives to the ones provided by the Mexican government.

When looking at the EZLN's use of media, it becomes clear that the movement was able to very quickly send out communiques to supporters in not only Mexico, but to a more global community of supporters as well. This was accomplished through the use of different types of media but perhaps the most important type of media that this organization utilized was the internet. By publishing their communiques online the EZLN was able to inform its supporters both within Mexico and abroad about any developments regarding the group's activities. This can be seen in the initial outbreak of fighting following the EZLN's declaration of war against the Mexican government in 1994.

The EZLN was able to broadcast its declaration that NAFTA was a "death sentence" for the indigenous communities in Chiapas through the use of captured radio stations (Wolfson 26). This use of radio demonstrated the willingness of the EZLN to utilize media to broadcast its message to its base of support in a manner that would be accessible to the local populations.

Initially the EZLN would attempt to utilize guerilla tactics modeled after the insurgency led by Mao Zedong during the Chinese Revolution in which the organization would attempt to centralize its strategic control of an area while simultaneously using decentralized operations in an effort to conduct a more flexible guerilla war (Wolfson 26). By utilizing these tactics the EZLN hoped to better counter the well funded and trained Mexican military and advance on Mexico City in order to take control of it. Despite its best efforts the EZLN found that confronting the Mexican military was a much more difficult task than it had initially anticipated and was able to last 10 days before needing to retreat back into Chiapas.

It was during this point that the EZLN would shift its tactics in this moment of crisis while the Mexican military pursued it in an effort to put down the indigenous movement. The EZLN was able to very effectively utilize old media like the aforementioned radio stations, as well as new media like the internet to quickly send out a message to a network of sympathetic NGOs and activists to increase the visibility of the movement and to hopefully shift the public's perception of the movement. The EZLN was able to successfully transmit its message and these networks began to mobilize in support of the EZLN which would result in the creation of a ceasefire after only 10 days of conflict (Wolfson 26).

This use of new media indicates that the EZLN is very aware of the importance media held in supporting its cause and effectively utilizes it to mobilize its base of support during a period where it was desperately needed. Not only this but it also demonstrated a willingness by the EZLN to shift its tactics and strategies in a way that would most benefit the movement. This willingness to change and adapt to new circumstances was an important reason that the EZLN was able to preserve itself and continue to pursue its vision of Mexico. The EZLN was able to

effectively utilize the gaps in the government's control over indigenous communities created by the neoliberal policies that had been pursued by the federal government.

The EZLN was also able to effectively recognize that the structural changes that were occurring to the Mexican economy would result in Chiapas becoming even more heavily impoverished than it had already been while also recognizing that there were no political structures in place to address these consequences (Wolfson 30). As a result the EZLN was able to effectively fill the vacuum created by the Mexican government and offer an alternative to the indigenous communities that would be heavily affected by the economic restructuring. In addition to this the flexibility of EZLN leaders to adapting their ideas and philosophies to the material conditions present in Chiapas made it possible for the movement to create a synthesis of the more traditional Marxist ideas regarding revolution and the reality that the cultural traditions of the Maya in the Selva Lacandona (Wolfson 33-34).

This mixture of ideas that sought to improve the conditions of the people while at the same time giving agency to the affected communities, was able to more effectively be circulated throughout Mexico and globally to create a larger base of support. By placing the emphasis on the communities rather than a small group of revolutionaries, the EZLN was able to create the conditions under which the possibility of more widespread resistance against the federal and state governments became more possible.

In addition to this the EZLN was also able to effectively utilize mass media to urge international organizations such as the Red Cross to observe the reality of human rights abuses that had been occurring in Chiapas while also distinguishing itself as an indigenous movement not a Marxist one. By utilizing mass media the EZLN were able to effectively paint the Mexican

government in a negative light in the international community thereby increasing the pressure on the federal government which was not succeeding in controlling the spread of information (Wolfson 35). It is also significant that the EZLN was able to distance itself from being labeled a Marxist uprising and instead labeling itself as a purely indigenous movement because it meant that the movement could better focus on its goals of establishing human rights and democracy in Mexico without the stigma that Marxist organizations had in much of the international community. This ability of the EZLN to effectively control the narrative surrounding the organization as well as its flexibility in changing tactics and philosophies to better align with the reality the movement experienced can largely be seen as contributing to the continued success of the EZLN.

In comparison to the EZLN, the EPR was not able to as effectively utilize the media to increase its visibility and support in the ways that the EZLN had been able to despite publically appearing after the EZLN's declaration of war. One way that this can be seen is through the smaller availability of the EPR's documents compared to the EZLN's. The EPR's communiques were not able to reach as large of an audience as the EZLN's and as a result this meant that there would be less support from networks of NGOs and activists that had existed with the EZLN thereby creating less visibility and pressure on the government to change the ways that it interacted with the organization (Bruhn 31). In addition the strategies of the EPR were more firmly rooted in Marxist-Leninist philosophy than the EZLN's synthesis of Marxist and Maya traditions. The EPR for example elaborate that its goals in the insurgency were to dismantle the bourgeois Mexican state and create in its place a dictatorship of the proletariat, although its more immediate goals were to fully establish the ideals promised by the Mexican Constitution of 1917

(Martinez Zavala 29-30). Despite the different ways that the goals of each movement were articulated, both organizations wished to establish a genuine democracy in Mexico, but by relying on Marxist Leninist rhetoric, the EPR were put at a disadvantage as they would be associated with the stigma that their political philosophy carried.

In addition the EPR were at another disadvantage compared to the EZLN as in Guerrero any indigenous radio station that existed up until 2004 was controlled by the Mexican government as a way of exerting its influence in the region further. This is contrasted with Chiapas in which there also existed the state controlled radio stations but there also existed independent indigenous radio stations that were able to provide a different narrative than the one the Mexican government wished to spread (Martinez Zavala 101-103). This meant that the EPR was not able to utilize these independent radio stations to build a network of support like the one that had begun to develop in Chiapas in the years leading up to the public appearance of the EZLN.

In addition to this the EPR did not prove as flexible as the EZLN did in adapting to the ever changing realities and would opt to continue to pursue a policy of armed resistance against the Mexican government in the years following its emergence which happened to coincide during a period in which the EZLN had been able to create an uneasy peace with the Mexican government (Martinez Zavala 32). What this resulted in was another significant difference between the EZLN and the EPR, which was that the EPR extended its activities outside of Guerrero and focused on other states as well most notably Oaxaca . This resulted in the EPR stretching itself thin resulting in internal divisions within the movement that further weakened the EPR's ability to sustain prolonged armed resistance (Figueroa-Ibarra and Martínez Zavala

158). This is compared to the EZLN who chose to focus its activities on the communities located within Chiapas, a decision that better allowed the EZLN to sustain support from the network of communities that made up its integral base of support.

Another reason that could be related to the lower success seen by the EPR compared to the EZLN could be tied to the sustained armed repression that had become the norm in Guerrero throughout the 1960s and 1970s. What this meant was that in Guerrero, the state where the EPR had the biggest societal impact, the federal government had already been accustomed to utilizing force in order to put down resistance movements and the relatively lower profile of the EPR compared to the EZLN made it more possible to continue this tactic of armed repression. What this meant was that even when the EPR began to take an approach that more closely resembled the EZLN's use of media starting in 2000, the federal government was able to continue to use force to try and put down the EPR. What is important to note however, is that despite the EPR finding lower levels of success compared to the EZLN, it is not a dead movement and the continued use of force by the state against other powerful actors in the region such as drug cartels continue to create the conditions under which the EPR can continue to exist although in a much lower capacity than before.

Chapter 6: NGOs, Nonviolent Movements, and Civil Society

Another important consideration that needs to be made in regards to each movement was what other actors were involved in the different states that helped to shape how people viewed the civic culture in the different states of Chiapas and Guerrero. This is important to analyze because the different influences of non state actors in the regions would have a profound effect on what type of success each movement would be able to have in each state. The role that the Catholic Church, NGOs and nonviolent activist groups will be particularly important to analyze because of how the different actors would interact with the communities that would serve as the base for both the EZLN and the EPR. It is in these differences that the different levels of success that each organization experienced will be able to be explained.

First the different priorities that the Catholic Church had in organizing communities in Chiapas and Guerrero must be analyzed in order to get a complete understanding on what differences could have contributed to the success of each movement. For example in Chiapas the Catholic Church played an important role in organizing the indigenous communities of Chiapas and supporting a goal of indigenous autonomy. The Catholic Church in this region would work with groups like the National Council for Indigenous Peoples (CNPI) and the Independent Central of Agricultural Workers and Peasants (CIOAC) (Barmeyer 124). These would be organizations that would play an active role in creating a system of connected communities which the EZLN would utilize as a major basis of support. The EZLN would continue to build on these systems and work within communities to help increase the standard of living for people living within regions controlled by the EZLN ensuring that the organization would continue to find support among these communities.

In contrast the Catholic Church had much different priorities when helping to organize the various indigenous and peasant communities in Guerrero. The poverty suffered by the rural campesino was exacerbated as a result of neoliberal policies including policies that required Mexico to import a certain amount of maize tariff free. One of the campesinos' staple crops was maize, and this requirement put them in direct competition with the United States' cheap maize from the U.S. Campesinos were then driven by a lack of opportunities to grow crops like marijuana and opium poppies to sustain themselves (Illades 164). The campesinos put themselves at a higher risk of violence on the part of the State and the cartels, which created conditions that have led to higher levels of migration, especially from indigenous groups out of Guerrero into nearby states (Illades 163). These conditions resulted in indigenous communities to organize around issues stemming from a strong cartel presence in a region in which State intervention was unreliable. Thus, the role the Church plays was different here: Now its goals were based on the objective of reducing levels of crime by working alongside these rural communities to attempt to fill in the gaps left by the State (Martinez Zaval, 96-97). This was evident in the creation of a Community Police in the region that served as an alternative to the State police force that was largely ineffective due to corruption and apathy towards affected communities (Martinez Zavala, 98). This Community Police proved to be very popular and functioned as a successful alternative to the State's resources. The Community Police focused on self protection against violence and force but did not actively call for violence against the State. This potentially could have created issues for the EPR which advocated a more revolutionary approach towards the State.

In addition to this NGOs and nonviolent activist groups played a significant role in shaping the civic culture to resist violent revolutionary movements in Guerrero, the EPR would have had more difficulty succeeding with its explicit calls for violence. Although NGOs in Guerrero were often critical of the government, they helped to integrate the rural campesinos into the neoliberal economic system. NGOs in Guerrero worked with the government agency Secretaria de Desarrollo Social (SEDESOL), which uses NGOs to oversee projects in poor rural regions to reduce levels of unemployment. These projects take several different forms including temporary employment during times of seasonal unemployment along with programs offering loans to small farmers (Yaworsky 412-413). The purpose of these programs was to limit any possible regional instability that could emerge as a result of the poverty experienced by the campesinos (Yaworsky 410). By integrating this group into the Mexican economy, the state was able to use the NGOs to spread the hegemony of the State among a rural population that would be essential as a base for the EPR.

In comparison the mostly indigeneous campesinos in Chiapas were seen as less of a priority to integrate into the Mexican economy as the region had been historically neglected and underdeveloped. A major industry in Guerrero is tourism with major centers of tourism like Acapulco being a major source of revenue for the State (Illades 161). Any instability in Guerrero would have threatened an important aspect of not only the economy of Guerrero but of the Mexican economy as a whole. The region of Chiapas where the indigenous community lived was left underdeveloped by the State which controlled the mineral wealth centralized in a different region of Chiapas. The campesinos were not seen as a priority by the State because of this and efforts to integrate them into the economy were not as extensive as in Guerrero (Barmeyer

123-124). This provided the EZLN with an opportunity to fill the void left by the State further ensuring the greater levels of success experienced by the organization.

Finally it is important to also acknowledge the role that non violent organizations like the CG500 and the ORganizacion Campesina de la Sierra del Sur (OCSS), organizations that advocated on behalf of the indigenous communities as well as other marginalized would have had in Guerrero. These organizations were critical of the State and its treatment of marginalized groups while simultaneously endeavoring to obtain State resources as a method to address the poverty plaguing the campesinos of Guerrero (Martinez Zavala 91). Seeking State resources as a solution had the possible effect of increasing the hegemony of the State by painting it as the solution to systemic problems. Although the OCSS and similar organizations were repeatedly the victims of State violence, there was a maintained commitment to a nonviolent approach to change (Martinez Zavala 95). By doing so, its actions reinforced the civic culture that did not advocate a violent approach to change once again causing potential issues for the EPR in sustaining itself in Guerrero. This is contrasted with the role that organizations like CIOAC had in Chiapas in establishing the networks that would be integral for the success of the EZLN while not viewing the federal government as a solution to their problems.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The EZLN and the EPR despite being seemingly similar organizations and arising in seemingly similar conditions resulted in two very different trajectories for these organizations. There were a number of reasons for this that were rooted in the socio-economic contexts in both the national and state level. The different forms of economic development as well as the policies that were pursued by the federal and state governments resulted in conditions that were different enough so that these two organizations would not take similar trajectories. The processes that would result in the federal government pursuing neoliberal policies at the end of the 20th century certainly created the motivation for both movements to originate but the different ways that this manifested itself in the Chiapas and Guerrero resulted different approaches that would be taken by the EZLN and the EPR.

With a clear understanding of these differences the different strategies and tactics pursued by the two groups can become more clear. As a result of networks of indigenous communities that had been established in Chiapas for example, the EZLN was able to grow support within said communities. This coupled with the flexibility of not only their tactics but their governing philosophy as well as the effective use of old and new media, something that EPR would have difficulty with, the EZLN was able to find continued success by putting pressure on the Mexican government and by finding support on a national and global scale. In addition to this the civil society found within Chiapas was able to successfully translated by the EZLN into further bases of support whereas cartel activity as well as the use of violence by the federal government in Guerrero meant that the EPR would have greater difficulty in finding success with their more rigid philosophy that lent itself more to violent resistance. It was because of these differences

that the EZLN was able to find more success than the EPR despite what might appear to be two very similar organizations at a mere glance. Some potential reservations that might arise from this conclusion is that because the EZLN emerged before the EPR and was already in peace talks by the time the EPR declared war on the Mexican government, this would have negatively affected the chances of the EPR experiencing any type of success on the level of the EZLN. However, this reservation fails to take into account the historical processes that went into the emergence of these groups that cannot be discounted if one wishes to fully understand the emergence and success of each group. These historical processes are integral to the success and failure of these movements by shaping the conditions that each group would encounter, and when these are taken into account a more complete picture begins to form.

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