

PEASANT REBELLIONS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: THE EZLN IN MEXICO AND THE
PKK IN TURKEY

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2010

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the
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Abstract

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by

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The formerly corporatist/populist states of Mexico and Turkey have faced significant armed peasant-based insurgencies in their post-1980 period of neoliberal reforms. The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in Chiapas, Mexico and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey's southeast serve as ideal case studies in order to deal with long unresolved questions in the literature on peasant rebellions: What is the role of greater capitalist penetration in the growth of these movements? Which peasants are the ones joining these movements? What role do political and militant organizations play in the process of mobilization?

Although the literature suggests that there is a correlation between peripheral states/regions and revolutionary movements, this project seeks to make those links more explicit by taking a process-oriented approach to how regions become peripheral and how revolutionary movements emerge. In doing so, I argue that Mexico and Turkey, with respect to the regions in focus, evince a distinct pattern of state building in comparison to European models.

The exercise of state power in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan has taken on institutionalized patterns. These patterns serve as a backdrop for understanding the ways different kinds of villages have been affected by state power. A basic typology of villages was established in terms of their relationship to the commercial economy, its social structure, and nature of social life. Stories of people who participated in, supported, or witnessed both insurgencies were collected. A small database of PKK insurgents was also created.

Together the data indicate that capitalist expansion did not play a primary or direct role in the formation of these insurgencies. Rather, villages where commercial agriculture had not come to dominate were the ones who participated. Such villages also had greater social-class diversity, contributing participants who were mobilized in varied ways. They responded to increasing land tensions, to greater repression from the state and its local allies, and to greater involvement in national politics in the form of leftist organizations building networks in local sites. The EZLN and the PKK were effective at linking themselves to these pre-existing networks. In doing so they built an elaborate organizational capacity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not possible without the support and friendship from various people throughout its duration. My advisor Mauricio Font has been and continues to be a source of wisdom. I will also always be grateful for his patience. I would also like to thank John Torpey for his significant guidance and insight during the writing process. I want to share my appreciation for Carmenza Gallo for challenging me with her biting but always astute comments. Others on the faculty and staff at the Graduate Center have also assisted and pushed (and fed) me. Anny Bakalian and Mehdi Bozorgmehr have been mentors. Sharon Lerner, aside from being a great boss, has been a savior in many ways. Matt Schoengood always kept his door open when I had a concern. Ellen Burns and Judy Koster have always brought good cheer to our office.

Several research centers at the Graduate Center supported me financially and gave me the opportunity to be a part of the rich intellectual life there. I learned a lot by sharing and debating ideas with faculty and colleagues, which certainly helped in the development of this dissertation project. I am grateful to the people at the Center for the Study of Philanthropy and Civil Society, the Center for Place, Culture, and Politics, and the Center for the Humanities. I am also thankful to the Graduate Center for a Doctoral Student Research Grant awarded to me in February of 2007.

The Graduate Center will always hold a special place in my heart because of the friends I have made there. Their empathy and commiseration have kept me going over the years. I will forever be thankful to Ronald Nerio, Agnieszka Kajrukszto, Christopher Leydon, Renee McGarry, Binnaz Saktanber, Uluhan Başaga, Zeynep Turan, Ozan Aksoy,

Fatmir Haskaj, Angelique Harris, and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz. There are yet others. I hope they know who they are.

I would also like to express my profound gratitude to the interviewees who generously gave of their time, and shared with me at times very painful stories. Without them this study would not be possible. I am further indebted to people and friends who helped me in various ways during my research in Chiapas, Turkey, and London. I can never fully repay José Luis Escalona Victoria and Necat Ayaz for their immense help, support, and most of all their friendship.

This study would also not have been possible without the generous assistance of Vera Beaudin Saeedpour, Director of the Kurdish Library and Museum in Brooklyn. She made me feel at home while doing research at the library. With all the frozen desserts she shared with me, she made the research process a sweet experience.

I also have to make mention of my local Starbucks in Bayside, Queens. I spent many hours and days writing my dissertation there. The managers and employees never once complained of me plugging my laptop into their outlets and using their power. Other cafes in my area were not so accommodating or simply did not provide what would be for me an atmosphere conducive for writing.

My friend Hamilton Maher also made the writing process a little easier and little less lonely for me. He would meet me at Starbucks during the spring and summer days of 2009. While he was writing his blog I was working on my dissertation. We talked about writing and he allowed me to bounce ideas off him. Sharing the experience with someone certainly made me more productive.

Most importantly, this dissertation and my life would not have meaning without my wonderful wife, Paula Sanchez. I cannot even describe the ways she has been an inspiration for me. Despite the constant messiness my papers and files have brought to our modest apartment, she has been extremely supportive and patient along the way. She has also been my best friend for the last fourteen years of my life, and will hopefully continue to be for the rest of my life.

Mehmet

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ABBREVIATIONS

AYOD	Ankara Higher Education Association
CNC	National Confederation of Peasants
CIOAC	Mexican Communist Party's Farm Workers and Peasant Independent Central
Dev Genç	Federation of Revolutionary Youth
DDKO	Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths
DISK	Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Unions
DP	Democrat Party
DPI	Department for Indian Protection
DTP	Democratic Society Party
EZLN	Zapatista Army of National Liberation
FLN	Forces of National Liberation
GAP	Southeastern Anatolia Project
Göç-Der	Migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture
INI	National Indianist Institute
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialization
KUK	Kurdistan National Liberators
LP	Proletarian Line
MHP	Nationalist Action Party
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
NUC	National Unity Committee
OCEZ	Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization

PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PNR	National Revolutionary Party
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party
RPP (CHP in Turkish)	Republican People's Party
UKO	National Liberation Army

Chapter I

Introduction

Examples of significant armed rural insurgencies during the post-1980 era of neoliberal reforms among developing countries require us to rethink more traditional questions concerning large-scale collective violence and their connection to shifts in the political economy. This new generation of peasant-based guerrilla movements forces us to reflect once again on what we know or thought we knew about the reasons behind these violent uprisings, requiring us to move beyond “passive” or “everyday forms” of peasant resistance (Gosner 1996a; see also Scott 1985).

Theda Skocpol (1982) effectively noted the main concerns that scholars theorizing peasant revolts have dealt with but never fully answered. Wickham-Crowley (1992), Kampwith (2002), Isaacmen (1990), Waterbury (1991), Ilcan (1994), Kearney (1996), Edelman (2000), McAuley (2003), and Warman (2003) have raised these concerns or some variation of them in regards to the latest wave of peasant agitation and activism. They essentially ask (1) which peasants are the ones joining these militant movements, (2) how greater capitalist¹ penetration in the countryside contributes to the growth of insurgencies, (3) how the reasons and opportunities for engaging in collective action are linked to the current reorganization of third-world states, and (4) how militant organizations foster counter-hegemonic revolutionary uprisings.

¹ Theda Skocpol (1982) uses the term “imperialist capitalism” which she implies one or all of three things: (1) the penetration of international markets (“expanding global capitalism”) in rural areas in the form of interest groups looking to convert the local economy into areas of export agriculture; (2) the impact of world prices that creates divisions among social classes; (3) the domination of colonial regimes that seek to exploit native populations.

My analysis of shifting political identities² among the peasantry is a means of responding effectively to the above questions. In this project I refer to two peasant-based guerrilla insurgencies as case studies—the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in Chiapas, Mexico and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey's eastern/southeastern provinces—in order to study the process of revolutionary mobilization among peasant populations in the age of globalization.³

In addition to Charles Tilly's discussion (2002; see footnotes above) on political identity formation, I also draw from Joel Migdal's (1974:13) term "social mobilization," which he defines as "the breaking down of old social, economic, and psychological commitments..." New commitments form, which become the basis for new political action. The focus on shifting political identities will help us deal with the two fundamental elements in the questions above: *who* and *how*? In other words, (1) *which*

² Charles Tilly (2002:48) notes, "The study of revolutions, popular contention, states, and the growth of capitalism inevitably raises questions concerning political identity."

³ By "globalization" I am referring to the "neoliberal" structural adjustment programs (SAPs) instituted by developing countries through the bequest of the IMF and the World Bank in which markets have been liberalized, production geared for export, and subsidies and price supports have been curtailed, effectively bringing an end to corporatist/populist policies of Third World states. According to James Petras (1999:63), "the neoliberal model of accumulation depends most directly on centralized state control horizontally linked to the international banks to implement debt payments and to export sectors to earn foreign exchange. Its vertical tie is to the citizen as subject, and the primary link is through a repressive state apparatus and the parastatal NGOs that diffuse social explosions." The impact of neoliberalism, particularly on rural populations of such states, according to the prevailing literature, has provoked nothing short of a social crisis. In Turkey's case, for example, the external debt crisis of 1978-79, which led the state to implement SAPs, brought about the most dramatic decline in that country's agricultural terms of trade (1976/7-1986) since the Great Depression (Boratov 1990:212). In Mexico, the external debt crisis of 1982 and 1983 had an "overwhelmingly" negative impact on all social and economic facets of that country (Rivera Ríos 1986:13).

Globalization also refers to the increased mobility of peoples and improved technologies of communication that allow for a greater diffusion of ideas, the formation of new forms of social networks, and the increasing social and political roles of civil society structures, such as domestic and international non-governmental organization (NGOs). The liberalization of the political economy associated with globalization has also made space for the formation of reformist political parties, which engage in international advocacy on the part of politically and economically marginalized social groups.

peasants,⁴ among this varied class of people, break from their place within the established circle of social relations and take part in militant movements? And, (2) *what* are the common individual-level mechanisms⁵ leading peasants to participate in the organizations of revolt during the post-1980 era?

Broad structural-level mechanisms shape the emergence of revolutionary movements. As argued by Charles Tilly (1993:11), these fall into three categories: “those that cause the emergence of rival claims to the state, those that cause commitment to such claims, those that make the holders of state power unready [and incapable] to suppress opposing coalitions and claims.” These categories reflect the dynamics of state formation and state-society relations in the regions in question. The challenge, and the larger purpose of this project, is to show how the individual-level mechanisms of the ways peasants come to join and actively support insurgencies converge with the broader structural-level mechanisms.

1.1 Criteria for Case Selection and Justification of Study

Several authors within John Foran’s (2003) edited book⁶ on the future of revolutionary struggle focus on the EZLN as a potential model for future forms of revolution. Karen Kampwirth raised the important issue of whether future resistance movements will emulate the Taliban or the EZLN. What especially caught my attention in her discussion was how the origins of the EZLN closely resembled those of the PKK (see White 2000).

⁴ According to Neil Harvey (1998:30), “Rather than reify a unified peasant class and its revolutionary potential, researchers have instead been challenged by the proliferation and differentiation of rural producers and their political movements.”

⁵ “Mechanisms are a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations,” and “processes are regular sequences of such mechanisms that produce similar (generally more complex and contingent) transformations of those elements” (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly 2001: 23).

Both are a product of smaller more virulent groups splitting from the larger communist movements in their respective countries during the 1970s.

Further similarities emerged in the literature. Scholars in the two cases focused on how large-scale historical processes led to the EZLN and the PKK through the formation of pan-ethnic identities among Mayan peasants in Chiapas and Kurdish peasants in Turkey (see Collier 2000, Nash 1995, Yashar 2005, for Mexico; and White 2000, 1999, van Bruinessen 1998, for Turkey). They stress these causal factors: (1) the end of the Cold War; (2) an expanding international discourse of minority rights within nation-states; the move away from class-based politics towards a more identity-based form; (3) the impact of Mayan and Kurdish refugees crossing borders in order to escape violent repression; (4) and the transitioning away from statist/populist concepts of citizenship rights and entitlements towards a more liberal and individualistic concept of citizenship.

Though significant in defining the current political and economic context at the global and national levels, the arguments made above fail to capture the social dynamics taking place at the local, village level, ultimately pushing people to join the EZLN and the PKK. In making this claim I am considering first-hand accounts by people who have lived the circumstances in and around both struggles, such as the situation as described by a Turkish soldier who fought in the civil war against the PKK:

I have a friend who is from that region. His aunt is a terrorist. He told me a story of his friendship with another boy. They grew up together till they were about eighteen. Then, my friend did his military service and became a village guard, whereas his friend joined the terrorists. One day, they came face-to-face with their weapons directed against each other, but neither fired a shot. One went this way, [*sic*] the other one went that way. Poor people! A guy has five uncles, [*sic*] three of them are village guards, [*sic*] the other two are terrorists. (Mater 2005:294)

⁶ The title of which, *The Future of Revolutions: Rethinking Radical Change in the Age of Globalization*, is the inspiration for the title of this dissertation.

Nor do the broad theories of pan-ethnic identity formation⁷ referred to above explain the role played by religious sectarian violence in the formation of the EZLN, as in the following observation by a Tzotzil Indian at the time of the uprising:

When word first came that the Zapatistas had occupied San Cristóbal, all the Chamulas said that they weren't afraid. But that was a lie; they were. Just to keep up appearances, though, everyone said that the only one who had anything to be afraid of, the single person responsible for all the bad things that have happened in Chamula, was the municipal president. In truth, of course, all of them knew that they too had participated in the round-ups and expulsions of their Protestant neighbors, and they were all afraid the Zapatistas were going to come and exact justice. (Womack 1999:260)

Moreover, the politicized ethnicity argument fails to explain why women have been so predominant among rank-and-file fighters within the EZLN and the PKK, a phenomenon that some have remarked is a significant break from past insurgencies (see Berger 2001, Nash 1995, Bird 2004).

Focusing on the social origins of these peasant-based movements will provide more direct, concrete answers to the research questions posed above. Whitmeyer and Hopcroft (1996: 517) argue, for instance, that the Zapatista movement is an “ideal” case study, “as it provides what is close to a natural experiment for testing theories of peasant rebellion....” This is because of the complexity of Chiapas in terms of geographic variation, forms of peasant cultivation, levels of integration into the national and global economies, ethnic and linguistic variation, peasant mobility, and degrees of communal solidarity. The same variables apply to Turkish Kurdistan (see O’Shea 2004).

⁷Studies on nationalism share similar conceptual limitations. One of the leading arguments of the field posits that the important question is not what constitutes a nation, but rather how nationhood functions as a political and cultural construct shaping the institutions within and between states. David McCrone (1998:4) responds, “This may seem to be sound advice, but if we think about it, it can be applied to any other social category we care to mention—social class, gender, ethnicity and so on—and can often lead to an obsession with deconstruction which actually never gets down to analyzing what happens ‘on the ground’.”

The leader of the EZLN Subcomandante Marcos's description of the peasants, which constituted the movement, also raises a series of important questions. Marcos states that the "poorest," "most backward," and "passive" Mayan peasants did not constitute the Zapatistas, "but, rather, the innovators: adventurous frontiersman and women who were convinced that they could make a new world" (quoted in Whitmeyer and Hopcroft 1996:519). Joel Migdal (1974) also argues that third-world peasant "innovators" are at the vanguard of their revolutions, but fails to define their social characteristics. Are the "innovators" the same as Eric Wolf's (1999 [1969]) revolutionary "middle peasant?" Or, is it that the innovators among the rural population are in reality the "rural proletariat"⁸ who Paige (1975, 1985) and Bartra (1974) argue is the revolutionary class? Are the social features of the EZLN innovators generalizable to other peasant rebellions of the same era? What is clear, however, is that a new analytical framework is needed that bridges "micro processes of revolutionary mobilization and leadership" with state-centered approaches (Goldstone 2001:139).

Marco Estrada (2007:304) describes the kind of young "innovators" from the peasant communities of the municipality of Las Margaritas who joined and worked in the organizations that predated the EZLN and ultimately served the militant organization in the early stages of its formation. They had the "courage to take on challenges and risks, to forsake the security of their known immediate environment and to venture out to learn other social worlds, modes of understanding and organizing life." Certainly, my findings in both cases reflect such personality types. But by identifying the mechanisms that led young people to form links with members of the militant organizations, and by

⁸ There is a significant debate within the literature on peasant revolts as to where the peasantry ends and the rural proletariat begins in terms of consciousness and social practice (see Skocpol 1982, Isaacmen 1990, Aydin 1985, Erturk 1980). I hope to also clarify the debate by answering the main questions posed in my study.

highlighting the circumstances that made those links meaningful, I hope to show how structural conditions, individual decisions, and chance events worked together to bring individual and movement together.

At the structural level, Yakın Ertürk (1980) establishes an important basis for comparing the Chiapan and Turkish-Kurdish cases. Her doctoral dissertation is an ethnographic study of two Kurdish villages in one of Turkey's southeast provinces explaining social change in rural, "pre-capitalist" economies as a function of center-periphery relations. Ertürk brings to bear the largely Latin American-based literature on internal colonialism, particularly Rodolfo Stavenhagen's (1970) analysis of Chiapas and Guatemala, and compares it to Turkey's relationship with its largest minority group, the mainly rural Kurdish population. She notes that while it is not clear what role ethnicity plays in capitalist forms of exploitation of culturally distinct rural populations, cultural/racial forms of exploitation clearly exist and need to be analyzed as a complimentary model to class-based forms of analyses in order to fully explain structures of domination.

Zülküf Aydın (1986:24-30), however, provides a deft criticism of the "internal colonialism" approach to regional peripherality by pointing out that the ethnic bases for explaining exploitation and domination fail to take into account the manner in which local power holders, who are of the same ethnicity as the local populations, have directly and willingly benefited from their incorporation into the state apparatus. Consequently, this project calls for re-evaluating the connections between "peripheral" states and regions and the emergence of support for militancy at the individual and village level.

The literature on revolutions certainly places an emphasis on peripherality as a necessary condition, and much of the literature has been class-based in the world-systems tradition (Goodwin 2001, Parsa 2001, Skocpol 1979, Goldstone 2001, Wolf 1999[1969], Paige 1975, Scott 1977, Stinchcombe 1961). As Jeff Goodwin (2001:75) writes, “their shared class-analytic approach is simply inadequate for the explanatory tasks at hand.” Their explanations, including Goodwin’s “state-centered” approach, offer mainly “presentist”⁹ discussions on peripheral structures. They largely fail to consider how the historical process of becoming peripheral relates to the emergence of such events, particularly at the more micro levels of village or individual.

In order to understand these connections between peripherality and the circumstances that make individual links to insurgency organizations such as the EZLN and the PKK meaningful, it is necessary to reconsider the sociology of the peasant.

1.2 Rethinking the Peasantry and Peasant Revolts

We can begin by reevaluating how we analyze class structures. Skocpol (1982) is right to criticize the rigid nature of Jeffery Paige’s (1975) income-based distinctions between sharecroppers and smallholding peasants. The Mexican Marxist scholar Roger Bartra¹⁰ (1974) is similar to Paige in making some overly arbitrary classifications. Bartra states that the “rural proletariat,” or day laborers, are essentially proletarian in character and not

⁹Dietrich Rueschemeyer (2003:311) writes, ‘Many hypotheses about the stability of rule are, after all, formulated in a “presentist” way that disregards the interaction of changing current conditions with factors that account for a path-dependent character of the phenomenon.’

¹⁰ Turkish Marxist scholars have also shown a tendency for employing unsubstantiated sweeping categorizations. The Turkish scholar Osman Devrez (1994) ignores any sense of variation in the Kurdish region in southeastern Anatolia, stating categorically that the region consists wholly of a feudal social structure. Interestingly, other leftist scholars in Turkey, such as Boratov, see the predominance of smallholding forms of production (see Aydin 1986). These discrepancies explain why Zülküf Aydin (1986:4-13) focuses on the “Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” their work being “theoretically unsound and empirically unfounded.”

peasant, dismissing terms such as “landless peasants” as “euphemisms,” while still acknowledging that their political activism is “channeled” through peasant movements, continues to “maintain” a peasant character, and is growing more militant in the peasant sense with the rise of land invasions in Mexico. Therefore, do sharecroppers, landless rural laborers, and small landholding peasants constitute different classes, as Paige, Bartra, and other scholars would have us believe? Paige and Bartra have failed to differentiate the revolutionary potential and forms of political activism among supposedly varied rural classes.

Historical evidence shows that peasants are adaptable and flexible in their ability to move back and forth between different, though similar, modes of production and labor organization. Thus there is also flexibility in their ability to alter their forms of social interaction, which then translates into fluid political identities (Barkey 1994, Harvey 1998). Allen Isaacmen (1990:16) sees extensive diversity among peasants in terms of economic activity and stratification: “Petty commodity producers, sharecroppers, labor tenants (squatters), and oscillating peasant workers were each enmeshed in different labor processes and property arrangements which varied additionally by gender and generation” (see also Ilcan 1994 on stratification within the peasant household). Such economic diversity can commonly coexist within the same peasant household in underdeveloped countries. It is not surprising, as Isaacmen adds (in a seeming challenge to Paige’s (1975) thesis) that peasant movements have incorporated both nationalist and socialist ideals in their agendas, as have the EZLN and the PKK.

We also have to reconsider the traditionally conceptualized dichotomy of urban and rural, especially in marginalized regions in underdeveloped countries. Due to a lack

of industrialization in such areas, towns and cities become extensions of rural life. They are primarily centers for the marketing of agricultural produce, the trading of goods, and administration (see O'Shea 2004). Consequently, in regions like Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan "...the cultural border between the city and the village is a fluid one" (Nalbantoğlu 1997:193). Considering such fluidity, Collier and Quaratiello (1999:92), in their anthropological study of the roots of the Zapatista rebellion, use Frank Cancian's definition of the "peasantry" who

[h]ave some ability to produce their own food, or have a close kinship connection to people who have some ability to produce their own food, or interact in a local economy with people who have some ability to produce their own food... This category includes...petty commodity producers...who produce things for sale or live by trading in local markets...; and semiproletarians...who currently work for wages but who also depend on food production or petty commodity production by themselves or their kinsmen for survival.

In response to this growing diversity and complexity, we need to consider Rodolfo Stavenhagen's (1975:70) caveats for studying peasant societies in developing countries:

To the extent that in underdeveloped countries the capitalist system has been implanted upon pre-existing social structures, rather than arising out of them as was the case in Western Europe, and coexists with modes of precapitalist production, the class structures in the agrarian sector will be complex and variegated and in a state of flux. Class limits will not be clearly defined, class relationships will be ambiguous, structures that belong to different historical epochs will coexist and cut across each other, and different and conflicting stratification systems will complicate the social scenery. It is therefore impossible to establish clearly a fixed number of social categories that might be common to the peasantry of the underdeveloped.

Stavenhagen raises some fundamentally important points. First, if we consider the development of capitalism as a function of the emergence of the international state system and state formation since the sixteenth century, then we need to reconsider the distinct development of capitalism in underdeveloped countries as a function of a

different form of state building in comparison to European models. These models, in turn, have developed into paradigms dominating social science perspectives (see also Barkey 1994, Pamuk 2004). Second, we need to consider how the development of class structures mesh with other bases of social identity—such as ethnicity, language, religion, tribal distinctions, geographical variation—in the formation of power structures.

Nevertheless, Stavenhagen (177) points to a commonality defining a peasant consciousness and existence. Although integrated into the capitalist system, they view land as a means of providing for their basic consumption needs, and not as a place to invest capital for greater economic returns. Consequently, the money they earn from the sale of their crops is not reinvested in the land or in the means of production, but used for the sustenance of the family. Capital is not accumulated. Consider the story of one displaced peasant from the village of Kavalkoy: “Even the poorest family in our village had a hundred sheep, enough to live on. We made our own yogurt and cheese, and bought only sugar and clothes from the city. But now, we are ninety percent unemployed and have nothing” (cited in Bird 2004:362). Several of my interviews with people who have been displaced from their villages in Turkey presented a similar—if romantic—viewpoint of the land as a place that provided for their sustenance.

Samuel Popkin (1979) argues that peasants seek either to increase their landholdings or to become landholders if they are landless. Land then forms the basis for social conflict in their villages, of which we see evidence for in both the EZLN and the PKK cases.

Such views of land do help in demarcating to some degree a distinct peasant identity, but class by itself continues to be an “amorphous” concept, as Weber argued.

Speaking of peasant attitudes towards land, Jennie Purnell (1999:18) writes in her analysis of the pro-Catholic rebellion against the secularizing revolutionary Mexican state during the late 1920s, “I do not mean to argue that the Cristiada was really about land even though the peasant rebels thought it was about religion, but rather that peasants understand land, religious practice and local authority to be intertwined in ways that depended upon their local histories.” Purnell is essentially saying that we should not do away with class analysis, as new social-movement theorists would have us believe (see also Kearney 1996), but that class needs to be seen as a circle of social relations that intermingle with and are influenced by political, legal, social, and cultural institutions that vary—sometimes considerably—by locality.¹¹

Purnell thus calls forth an institutionally interactive view of social interactions. This means rethinking more traditional classifications of “conservative” versus “radical” forms of village solidarity in explaining the potential for revolutionary action (Skocpol 1982; see also Whitmeyer & Hopcroft 1996). Such classifications assume that solidarities in villages are complete and unproblematic (see also Popkin 1979). If we accept the idea

¹¹ One foundation for such a conception is the historian Marc Bloch’s approach to the study of feudalism, which he defines “as a system of human relations,” whose analysis can be broken down to its elements that determine the nature of social ties within the system. Ultimately, this means moving our conceptualization beyond simply the processes of production (Poston, foreword to Bloch 1965 [1961]).

The dynamic and interactive view of social interaction also fits with Isaacmen’s view of the peasant labor process, which can be characterized as (1) the organization and composition of the peasant labor force; (2) the interactions between “necessary” and “surplus” labor in the form of out-migration of labor, the seasonal return of such labor for harvesting, and the resulting stratification of household labor along gender and generational lines (see also Ilcan 1994); (3) the degree that peasants can engage in production independent of landlords, the state, and other dominant or ruling classes; (4) the degree that peasant labor is supervised by outside agents and obligations enforced by political and legal institutions; (5) and the degree that peasants take on the risk of production, which refers not only to how national and international markets impinge upon the peasant lifestyle, creating deeper class inequalities and greater dependence of poorer peasants on landlords and the merchant classes, but also to the ways in which state-organized or national institutions of finance interact with local forms of usury to create a system of peasant indebtedness and the loss of land (see also Aydin 1986).

Furthermore, ethnographic studies (Aydin 1986; Ertürk 1980) show considerable variation in terms of social and class structures in different Kurdish villages in southeastern Turkey.

that (political) identity formation is both “collective” and “relational” (Tilly 2002), and “social mobilization” as “the breaking down of old social, psychological, and economic commitments” (Migdal 1974:13), then we need to place a greater emphasis on the breakdown or the stretching of older solidarities and/or the formation of new ones in explaining how peasants come to join insurgencies.

Different mechanisms are involved in the breakdown or stretching of existing social bonds and the formation of new ones within the process of joining insurgencies. The new analytical approach becomes identifying the different mechanisms involved in the process of insurgent mobilization. Consider the following, which points to one basic mechanism involved in the breakdown of certain bonds of social interaction in the village and implicitly opening the door to the formation of new social connections:

The motivations that lead to migration are the same everywhere. In the first place there is the need for money to cover the deficit in the rural budget. It is said that in the past, the heads of families designated some young men who had to leave the village to seek work outside. These young men would regularly send their wages and savings gifts customarily presented by returning members of the community, or to invest in some business which promised greater profit. Today the head of a family does not intervene in this process. His authority is now diminished and disputed and no longer permits him to give efficient orders. Both young men and young men freely take off for distant work locations and for the cities. They do, however, continue to send money to their relatives in the community.... In the geographic zones where the seasons alternate and which provide the largest proportion of migratory workers, these leave to work for an average of six to seven months a year, from November to May; that is, just before the beginning of the rainy season. (Labouret quoted in Stavenhagen 1975:78)

There is no indication what is exactly pointing to the breakdown of parental authority in peasant households other than an indirect or abstract economic push factor(s). However, seasonal out-migration for work reasons, as the citation shows, is one mechanism that opens the door for further mechanisms that may link individuals to militant organizations. Given circumstances will help (or fail) to make those developing links more

meaningful.¹² We also get a sense of who is susceptible to take on new identities. I will try to identify in this study the various individual-level mechanisms that led people in both the Mexican and Turkish cases to the EZLN and PKK respectively, and how these developing links become meaningful.

1.3 Literature Review: Peasants and Revolution

Class-based or modes-of-production forms of analyses formed one key category during the Cold War period of scholarly work on peasant rebellions and revolutions (see Stinchcombe 1961, Moore 1966, Wolf 1999[1969], Migdal 1974, Paige 1975 & 1985, Scott 1977). The common theme among these scholars is the socially disruptive nature of emerging capitalism among agrarian societies. Paige and Stinchcombe argue that such a process creates a new social class with revolutionary potential. Others see it, however, creating a defensive reaction among the peasantry (the “moral economy” perspective) due to greater exploitation and newfound opportunities for mobilization that come as the traditionally dominant landed elite weakens. As such, while there is a general agreement that conflict arises over competition for land and thus threats to the subsistence levels of rural populations, there is a general disagreement over who are the main political actors behind rural revolts.

Stinchcombe and Paige see a proletariat-like group of sharecroppers, renters, and rural wage laborers as the revolutionary actors in the countryside. The others see a coalition between various types of peasants (i.e., “middle peasants” and wealthier

¹²Lale Yalçın-Heckmann’s (1991:35-36) ethnographic study of the Kurdish village of Sisin in the province of Hakkari provides an example of those circumstances that may help make developing links to the PKK meaningful. She writes, “The state security measures on the one hand, and the pressures from the Kurdish nationalists [PKK] on the other hand put the villagers under the immediate pressure of having to choose sides and to bear the consequences.”

peasants with poorer smallholding farmers) who have the autonomous village structures and solidarities to resist the intrusions of state-supported capitalist interests. The association of globalization with greater capitalist intrusion into the countryside gives the above debate over “which peasants?” currency. I hope to make a more definitive contribution in this regard.

Furthermore, there are those (see Skocpol 1982, Popkin 1979, Wickham-Crowley 1992) that critique the emphasis placed on advancing capitalism by the above theorists as the primary basis of peasant revolts. Skocpol (1982:370), for instance, writes, “there is...room to doubt whether such commercialization is a necessary cause, or even an essential concomitant of peasant-based revolution.” I will try to add further insight on this debate in this project.

Of the class-based group of researchers only Migdal gives political organizations a central role in revolutions. But Migdal makes distinctions between periods of revolution and levels of organization. The early twentieth century for Migdal saw revolutions of a more spontaneous type, relying less on institutionalized organizational structures, as compared with those of the middle twentieth century (China) and the latter half the same century (Vietnam).

Looking at the long-term histories of both Chiapas and Ottoman-Turkish Kurdistan, earlier revolts were not spontaneous but, rather, relied on local institutional structures of political organization that developed corresponding to the formation of the larger state structures of that period (see also Tilly 2002). Further, I argue in this study that such structures have left lasting institutional legacies that have provided the structural conditions from which the EZLN and the PKK could emerge.

Nevertheless, Migdal's (1974:249) "four analytical levels of revolutionary actions and goals by peasants" gives us a model by which insurgency organizations can grow on the village level. The first level has to do with peasants who accommodate revolutionary institutions. In such a case, peasants are ambivalent about the larger political order, and the revolutionary organization is able to win their support by providing services to fulfill immediate needs and deal with local injustices. The organization thus gains trust. In the second level, peasants begin to turn to the organization for individual material and social gain and in return provide low levels of participation. The third level entails collective gains for a particular village, part of a village, or a group in return for greater revolutionary action. The final stage involves the greatest degree of involvement and sacrifice on the part of the peasantry because they have identified with the broadest goals of the revolutionaries, which is to overthrow the prevailing political and social order, and replace them with a revolutionary order and its leadership.

This project is concerned with explicating the dynamics and identifying the mechanisms that determine how Migdal's levels of affiliation change. His focus is more the village level. Mine is more the individual level within different types of village structures. Therefore, my analysis takes several factors into account: How do the different types of village structures influence affiliation between village and militant group? What role do precursor political/militant organizations play in the levels of village affiliation with later revolutionary organizations? How do the fluid economic activities of the members of peasant households and perhaps the greater mobility of peasants in the current era affect Migdal's model?

Theda Skocpol (1979) breaks away from the somewhat-exclusive focus on economic class structures and instead deals with how they interact with state structures. In her comparative analysis of great social revolutions among crumbling agrarian bureaucracies of eighteenth century France and twentieth century Russia and China, she brings the state's role in revolutionary mobilization into focus. She introduces important variables such as state autonomy and state capacity, and discusses the manner that state crisis, caused by pressures emanating from more powerful states, leads to conflict between state actors and economic elites. In the countryside, Skocpol emphasizes the nature of autonomous rural society in Russia's case. Since village organizations and their leadership were responsible for running the everyday administrative matters of taxation and land distribution, rural society had the structure to mobilize peasants to attack the prevailing social and political order while the political and economic elites were locked in conflict. In the Chinese case, state crisis helped create a mass of displaced peasants ready for mobilization by Maoist revolutionaries.

Skocpol's study similar to the ones above is macro and does not explain individual level mechanisms of mobilization and support for revolutions. Consequently, she makes a big leap in explaining peasant revolutionary action in the context of a vacuum of state power in the Russian case. State crisis does not necessarily lead to a weakening of state power. In the case of the Mexico and Turkey in the post-1980 period, I argue that state weakness in the face of social and economic instability emerging since the 1970s led these states to try and impose greater state control over regions where they historically had a weak presence through twin methods of militarization and armed alliances with certain social groups of those regions.

Samuel Popkin (1979) made significant contributions to the study of peasant-based revolutions by providing a more nuanced look at peasant communities. He indicates that in villages, as anywhere else, suffer from problems of organization and collective action. Such problems of village cooperation provide the backdrop for the kinds of calculations that individual peasants make in deciding to support collective actions and/or in accepting to give power to others. In making the argument, he debunks the basic premises of the class-based analyses of “the moral economists.” Popkin writes that capitalist-induced subsistence crises do not automatically translate into revolutionary action. In fact, Popkin argues, it is really not about threats to subsistence, but rather about outside political organizations effectively mobilizing peasants by providing the kinds of benefits to individuals that village organization previously could not provide or became less capable of providing. In this way, “peasants in subsistence areas...can be as revolutionary, indeed more so, than peasants in commercial centers” (28).

Popkin’s thesis provides important theoretical support for identifying the individual-level mechanisms by which peasants link up with militant organizations, as seemingly corporate villages are not all that corporate but racked by considerable divisions and varied interests. In doing so, he opens the door to various possible and contingent outcomes to revolutionary mobilization in the countryside, thus raising the justification for further exploration.

Timothy Wickham-Crowley’s (1992) study provides perhaps the most comprehensive comparative historical analysis of revolutionary movements. He focuses on the first (1950s-60s) and second (1970s-80s) waves of Latin American guerrilla insurgencies. His findings are compelling. The regions most susceptible to rebellion

among the countries he studied showed certain characteristics: “(1) they had land-tenure structures featuring relatively high rates of sharecropping or squatting; (2) they had recent or long-term histories of assaults on the landed security of peasant cultivators; (3) they had long-term histories of resistance; and (4) they displayed social and cultural structures that provided revolutionaries with ready access to a sympathetic peasant population” (231). Further, he presents statistics that indicate that the higher the percentage of farmers relative to wage-earning workers in a particular region the higher the degree of guerrilla control.

Wickham-Crowley’s discussions of the broad-level historical processes of conclusions three and four are somewhat vague, however. He does not sufficiently delve into the processes of state building. He focuses rather on party politics in his various countries of interest. A longer-term analysis of state formation can provide a fuller picture of the state-society dynamics behind how histories of resistance and social and cultural structures of revolution could have merged, for instance, with the actions taken by the EZLN and the PKK.

Wickham-Crowley also only provides a minor attempt to link the agency of individual revolutionaries by looking at a few leaders, such as in the Cuban revolution. This project hopes to provide more substantive connections between structural history and the mechanisms by which individual peasants join revolutionary movements.

1.4 Outline of Presentation

The literature review above serves as a framework for carrying out the comparative historical analysis of the EZLN and PKK movements. Chapter II discusses the

methodology of the project, specifically the technique and purpose of comparative historical analysis, the variables that measure the quality and extent of state-society relations, the manner in which peasant voices (or those who come from peasant backgrounds) were collected, and how these stories are analyzed in order to highlight the mechanisms of insurgency participation. I also note some of the limitations of the project.

Chapter III discusses the long-term processes of state formation in the regions of Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan, starting from the sixteenth century with the arrival of the Spanish colonial empire and the emergence of the Ottoman Empire. The reason for beginning the history of state formation in the sixteenth century is because it is in this period that the first large hegemonic structures of state—those of the Spanish colonial empire and the Ottoman Empire—were introduced. As these structures of state corresponded to the emergence of the international state system of competing empires during that century, Chiapas and Kurdistan obtained geo-political significance for the first time as well. It is directly from these large structures of imperial states that the modern national states of Mexico and Turkey emerged. The geopolitics of Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan helped determine the nature of their incorporation into their respective national states.

In Chapter III, I argue that these regions evinced a model of state incorporation that is distinct from European-centered forms of state building. In such a model, state power is not capable of eliminating local power holders and instead seeks to establish alliances and strategize with them in order to ward off threats from other states and those local leaders who are resistant. This model is labeled “negotiated-intensive” state building. I further argue that such a model is the basis for understanding

“peripheralization” (Aubry 2005), a process in which the state never achieves a monopoly on violence, thus leading to high levels of political factionalization and instability, preventing in turn the development of effective state institutions and economic growth.

Chapter IV deals with the institutional legacies of negotiated-intensive state building and peripheralization in the twentieth century, and the manner in which they interacted with the political and social developments in the latter half of the century that provided the potential and space for the EZLN and the PKK to grow. The Mexican and Turkish states failed to institute effective bureaucracies and state structures, even as they sought to transition towards a more developed capitalist economy. Instead, they continued to depend on local power holders for any semblance of control in the regions of focus (bargaining off degrees of “state autonomy” in order to increase some degree of “state capacity” in the region). In turn, local elites came to dominate local institutions in certain communities and villages, thus constituting a kind of regional oligarchy in both cases. Outside the control of these oligarchies and thus their corresponding states, other communities and villages existed in a more corporate form. Considerable demographic growth in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan coincided with increasing leftwing student and militant activism in the regions. Insecure central Mexican and Turkish states militarized the region and depended on local paramilitaries to control the region. Land tensions, paramilitary groups, and military repression converged to create high levels of violence and conflict. Contributing to this context, the EZLN and the PKK opportunistically found spaces and villages where they could situate themselves and begin mobilizing.

Chapter V deals with the main research questions posed in this project. It begins by trying to answer the larger question of the role of capitalism in the emergence of the EZLN and PKK movements. As part of this larger question, the types of villages/communities that showed a greater propensity for participation in the insurgencies are explored. This calls for analyzing the relationship of these villages to commercial agriculture and associated political structures. The individual stories of the insurgents help tie the question on the role of capitalism to the identification of the common mechanisms that led peasants to the movements, who they were, and the manner in which the organizations themselves succeeded in mobilizing to the extent that they did. Social profiles of the militants (in the PKK case) are presented along with life narratives.

In Chapter V, I identify six common mechanisms by which peasants have established links with the EZLN and the PKK. These are through: (1) seasonal or even more permanent migration for employment to cities/towns or nearby regions; (2) inter-peasant (local area conflict) or intra-village conflict—due to demographic factors such as population growth, or state repression, and/or third party actors, such as paramilitary groups, who foment conflict; (3) the desire to escape the repression of village-based authority figures; (4) intra-family conflict; (5) the role of the insurgent organization or less-militant precursors in recruitment within the village; (6) leaving the village or community to attend schools in cities or towns (because of the dearth of schools in villages) where psychological displacement from the village and family solidifies, and where organized political movements sweep up young peasants. These mechanisms often work in combination leading to the formation of meaningful ties with insurgent organizations.

These mechanisms have most directly affected, following Wickham-Crowley's (1992) findings on guerrilla movements in Latin America, squatter peasant communities in the Lacandón Forest of Chiapas, and those mainly smallholding villages in southeastern Turkey that have faced what I call "squatter-like" dynamics—conflicts between peasant households over land and honor due to significant demographic growth and/or violent repression from the state or third-party actors allied with the state. The peasant communities and villages in the Mexican and Turkish cases most supportive of the revolutionary movements are also those where commercial agriculture has not completely taken over subsistence cultivation. Thus capitalism as a force plays more of an indirect role in the emergence and growth of insurgencies. Consequently, the restructuring of political economies due to globalization is less of a factor than previously imagined.

Rather, I argue, rural households faced an increasingly precarious existence due to growing family size and increasingly ill-defined legal status as land clearing for cultivation took place unofficially. Tensions increased, spurred further along by state policies. Mexican and Turkish state policies that sought to impose their power on eastern Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan through militarization and the formation of alliances with certain social groups quite willing to employ violence against groups suspected of rebellion or activism. The EZLN and the PKK exploited this environment to recruit among various communities, and opportunistically linked themselves to the already-established networks formed by precursor political groups, a phenomenon not previously noted in the literature.

Chapter VI is the conclusion. I touch on how structure and individual agency have acted together in order to promote the EZLN and the PKK. Answers are reiterated to the key research questions. The applicability of these two cases in identifying potential flashpoints of violence in other parts of the world is discussed. Thus key factors identified in this project serve, in turn, as a foundation for a generalizable theory of peasant rebellions in the age of globalization. Further areas of research are also suggested.

Chapter II Methodology

In focusing on peasant-based revolts in the form of the EZLN and the PKK I noted in chapter one that the literature in this area has been overly structural in focus and deficient in its analysis of human agency, leaving “little room for actors to seek to fulfill their dreams, make alliances, learn from one another, and make mistakes” (McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly 2001:194). This study argues that the identification and analysis of the mechanisms of shifting political identities (which I identify in Chapter I) can explain the mobilization of the peasantry behind the EZLN and the PKK and help bridge the divide between structure and agency. In this chapter I will present: (1) the conceptual and analytical approaches by which I deal with my contention, (2) the method of study, and (3) the limitations of this study.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

According to Goldstone (2003), the purpose of comparative historical analysis, which this study utilizes, is to determine the causal sequences, patterns, and their outcomes in a finite set of cases, usually two or three. Such work is a combination, typically, of historical and qualitative data. This approach can be effective in bringing to light causal complexity. The evolution of comparative studies of social movements has confirmed that a single set of variables or causes that produce the same results in all countries do not exist. Consequently, such cases are chosen fairly narrowly, based on strong institutional and cultural similarities, which also usually means geographic proximity (see McAdam et al 2001). The hope is by choosing significantly similar cases, the differences among them that significantly contribute to the outcome—as for example peasant-based revolts—will be identified.

McAdam et al, however, argue that it is wise to break with the tradition of CHA in choosing similar cases and focus instead on “paired comparisons of uncommon cases” (2001:81-84). For them such an approach facilitates the identification of significantly similar causal mechanisms, while allowing the investigator to bring to light how these mechanisms interact with each other, and with the contextual historical, institutional, and cultural realities of the specific cases. Varied contexts can show how different combinations of mechanisms lead to differing political processes and, consequently, to distinct outcomes. Still, the authors do acknowledge some considerable drawbacks in the dissimilar case approach, such as missing the role played by complex contextual factors.

I see the EZLN and the PKK cases as somewhere in between the traditional CHA method of narrowly choosing similar cases, and the paired comparison of the uncommon cases method. But that is part of the strength of this study. Finding the common dynamics and causes of peasant revolts across cases requires some degree of homogeneity in terms of large-scale historical processes that have led up to the group of selected cases. Simultaneously, however, “such a sample should itself be as *heterogenous* as possible to ensure a more or less adequate representation of the larger universe of cases” (Goodwin 2001:6).

Ertürk (1980:44-45, see footnotes), using Stavenhagen’s analysis of Latin American indigenous peasants in Chiapas and Guatemala, certainly reveals the broader homogenous qualities of the Mexican and Turkish cases in that both countries structurally evince the conditions of internal colonialism in that the peripheral nature of Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan is the product of both economic exploitation and cultural domination. But within this system common to both countries there is heterogeneity: “Unlike the Kurdish region in Turkey, where social and economic differentiation exists within the Kurdish entity itself, the structure of the

Indian community maintains relative equality among the Indians, creating the whole of the community's dependence on the city."

I also break from traditional comparative sociology in another important manner; I am not selecting the cases based specifically on their dependent variable or outcome, as many studies have done by studying those cases that ended in successful revolutions and evaluating how these differed from one another (see McAdam et al 2001). This project is more inductive. It seeks to identify common "transformative mechanisms," events, or processes that have led to the emergence of peasant-based revolts. I am constructing historical narratives at more than one level of analysis.¹ Large-scale political and social events and their legacies are somehow linked to the significant events found in the stories of the lives of individuals that have come to participate in the EZLN and the PKK. How are they linked? Are there common mechanisms in both cases that help explain how people came to join both these movements?

Through a process-based analysis of identifying key mechanisms will help to explain the "salient features" in these "episodes" of rural uprisings (Tilly 2001:24).² Nonetheless, it is important to point out that although the EZLN and the PKK are not "successful" in the sense of capturing state power, they are successful in that they have survived for years, branched out organizationally, and have had an impact on national politics.³ The PKK has arguably been more

¹ This is what William Sewell Jr. (2005:98) calls "multiple causal narrative," which is a kind of compromise between historical analysis of capturing complexity and the sociological strategy of specifying the dynamics of one causal factor and subsuming other causal factors to this one. In this form, the cases I have selected "can be *narrated* convincingly in terms of the operation of analogous causal processes, which in practice mean above all that narratives based on these analogies make sense of the numerous details that otherwise would seem purely accidental" (Sewell 2005:100).

² As implied in the previous footnote, this kind of historical approach can bring to the fore disciplinary tensions that exist between history and the social sciences. According to Dietrich Rueschemeyer (2003:313), while history seeks to explain the development of particular events, the historically-minded social sciences seek "propositions usable in various historical explanations." But, he adds, the difference is not all that significant since "[t]he theoretical core of both kinds of work consists in the development and validation of explanatory hypotheses."

³ According to Yashar (2005:22), the strength of a movement is measured by three factors. These are "organizational endurance, geographic scope, *and* mobilizational capacity." Endurance refers to the organization's ability to survive over time. Geographical scope refers to the movement having leaders and followers at the regional and national

successful than the EZLN in this regard, and a process-oriented analysis focusing on the emergence and growth of the movements can illuminate the reasons why.

Nevertheless, this study continues to reflect important elements of traditional comparative historical analysis by selecting similar cases. The important similarities have been presented in Chapter I as to the origins of the EZLN and the PKK. They stem from the urban-based left-wing student movements of the late 1960s and 1970s in their respective countries. Further, both countries belong to a family of polities identified alternatively as third-world states, underdeveloped or developing countries, or formerly corporatist states. Finally, the EZLN and the PKK belong to a particular historical period that I have identified as globalization.

But another important reason exists as to why this study simultaneously conforms to traditional comparative sociology. There is an important literature in the area of comparative peasant-based revolutions within developing countries. As such, it is important to test the findings within this literature. The purpose of comparative historical analysis is in part hypothesis testing (see Goldstone 2003). For instance, as noted in the literature review, this project is about reevaluating which peasants are revolutionary, the role played by militant organizations in mobilizing them, the impact of global capitalism on the emergence of rural insurgencies, the importance of communal structures and the autonomous existence of villages in determining the potential of rural uprisings, and finally how changes in state capacity also affect the growth of militancy. I would further add, comparative analysis of cases in the current era of globalization will allow us to compare such cases with those of prior historical periods, allowing us to determine the degree of historical contingency in the hypotheses to be tested.

levels. I would include followers at the transnational level as well. Yashar notes that mobilizational capacity is the most problematic because it requires a comparative analysis of past movements in order to explain the level of capacity attained. Measuring mobilizational capacity in itself justifies taking the CHA approach to studying the movements in question. According to the above criteria, the EZLN and the PKK are relatively strong movements.

2.2 History and Shifting Political Identities

Comparative historical analysis naturally calls for highlighting one's analytical approach to historical processes. In this study I am specifically referring to shifting political identities.

In Chapter I, the discussion on rethinking the peasantry pointed to the need to acknowledge the fluid nature of rural class structures, the distinct development of capitalism in underdeveloped countries, as well as how this development of capitalism pointed to a process of state building that strayed from European models. In other words, the historical process by which regions become peripheral has to be reevaluated in order to be able to identify the dynamic mechanisms by which peasant revolts emerge at a broader level. But on a micro-level, we need to identify the mechanisms of political identity shift among peasants who mobilized on behalf of or supported the EZLN and the PKK. Since these mechanisms reflect the dynamics of the larger social structures, we can begin to build connections between the various levels of analysis, for if we can “understand what happens at the microlevel of individuals and their interactions” we can then “evaluate and improve our theories at the macro level of movements, states, revolutions, and so on” (Jasper 2004:4). In this study, I am specifically interested in where macro-level processes (i.e., peripheralization) and those at the micro-level (e.g., individual peasants mobilizing on behalf or coming to support the EZLN and the PKK) converge.

The historian and theorist Marc Bloch introduced such a framework in his *Feudal Society*, which approached feudalism “as a system of human relations,” that includes studying elements in the “social order” which are not involved in productive processes or directly determined by them. And this means “writing the story of the social ties...” (Postan 1965 [1961]:xii). Shifting political identity is the story of those social ties and the factors that alter

them. This conceptual approach falls in the category of relational analysis, which “focuses on the transaction, interaction, information flow, exchange, mutual influence, or social tie as its elementary unit” (Tilly 2002:34). In identifying the mechanisms of political identity shift, the elementary unit of analysis will consist of the ways social ties between peasants and militant organizations developed.

Yet, “identity” is a problematic notion bounced around primordial, instrumentalist, and post-structuralist viewpoints (Yashar 2005). Brubaker and Cooper (2000) propose that the term be dropped from scholarly work because of its overly broad usage and its lack of analytical significance. They argue that “identity” does not denote the processes by which a sense of “groupness” develops among people. According to the authors, “categorical commonalities” and “relational connectedness” interact with factors such as historically significant events that come to constitute a shared historical memory. Memory is framed in the form of “compelling public narratives” and discourses. The way the cited factors interact will determine the nature of groupness. Brubaker and Cooper have effectively reintroduced an important concept in identity studies: the significantly historical, relational, and contingent mechanisms involved in the formation of social/political groups.

Tilly (2002), in developing the ideas laid out by Brubaker and Cooper, argues that instead of doing away with “identity,” the term needs to be defined more precisely. He does so, in one case, by providing a careful analysis of the pivotal role played by transforming political identities in the development of national states since the early nineteenth century, using England as an example. His conclusions are: (1) political identities in all cases are “relational” and “collective,” which indicates that they are susceptible to change as political interactions and strategies change, and as new opportunities present themselves; (2) identities are verbalized in the form of stories

that explain how boundaries that demarcate groups (“us” and “them”) have formed; (3) legitimation of political identities are dependent on the acceptance or rejection of contingent forms of action of the group in question by other parties; (4) legitimation, or lack of it, in turn, “constrains” and “facilitates” the collective action of the group in question; (5) strong differences appear between political identities found in the routine structures of local everyday life (i.e., kinship, friendship, work, neighborhood, etc.) and those found in “public life” (i.e., candidate, supporter, party member, election official, etc.). Identities found in public life imply relatively high levels of legitimacy. Guerrilla movements, on the other hand, are a kind of political identity that emerges as the insurgency organization effectively inserts itself into the routine structures of everyday life, and, in turn, alters the commitments people have to those structures.

In considering how political identities form, we must acknowledge that “[e]ach polity has a history; its existing membership and the processes by which they gained entry strongly constrain succeeding challenges and entries” (Tilly 2002:67). In order to operationalize the changing relationship between the state and its various populations, it is useful to historically analyze the philosophical origins of the state (Buck-Morss 2000). Such an analysis requires evaluating the interplay of the (1) ideological/cultural bases of power, (2) the institutions by which power is exercised, and (3) geo-political realities. These interactions, in turn, determine “the act of sovereignty,” which is the act of defining the collective and its enemy(ies). This act then serves to legitimize the state’s claim to the monopoly on the use of violence, in the Weberian sense, against people and their property (Buck-Morss 2000:8-9).

The institutional elements of state are the structural core by which power is exercised. The formation of this structural core, a process that I will call state building, can be

operationalized by the interactions of two key variables. The first of these is “state capacity.”⁴ This variable refers to the ability of the state to carry out its policies in the different regions of its territory. More specifically, ‘[s]trong states are those with high capabilities “to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate or use resources in determined ways”’ (Özbudun 1996:134). According to McAdam et al (2001), state capacity typically increases historically through four interrelated processes. These are the growth of direct rule over indirect rule, the expansion of central state power over geographically peripheral areas, the institutionalization of standard state practices and identities, and growth in the number of ways the state can carry out its policies. In weak states, direct rule does not supercede indirect rule in peripheral areas. The literature of state building has largely ignored processes by which central states have failed to overcome indirect rule and instead sought ways to accommodate it and adapt it to their needs.

Tilly (2004) describes the processes of state building more succinctly as the broadening of “trust networks.” Within society trust networks have developed in order to minimize the risks in various types of engagements, such as long-distance trade, marriage, monetary investment, crafts, education, etc. States, in turn, vie to establish linkages to these networks and broaden them in order to consolidate its power and to promote long-term development projects. States benefit from their linkage to and broadening of trust networks by reducing transaction costs of communication and movement of goods, by recruiting people in its service, extracting resources, and by regulating relationships in order to control and lessen the possibility of conflict between parties.

State capacity is often reflected in the nature of its civilian, police, and military bureaucracies. Weak states have bureaucracies that lack “organizational integrity,” defined as

⁴ See Evren Balta’s dissertation (2007) for a good review of the literature on state capacity.

“institutional coherence, competence, and capacity” (Woolcock 1997:168). The lack of governmental oversight over corrupt regional officials can certainly add to the tensions and violence in that area.

The corruption of bureaucracies leads us to the second variable or measure of state: “state autonomy.” This variable refers to the degree that “[a] bureaucratic apparatus, or a segment of it, can be said to be relatively autonomous when those who hold high civil and/or military posts satisfy two conditions: (1) they are not recruited from the dominant landed, commercial, or industrial classes; (2) they do not form close personal and economic ties with those classes after their elevation to high office” (Trimberger quoted in Skocpol 1985:10). States can also achieve autonomy if they do not allow their bureaucracies to be captured by politically-minded interest groups as well, such as those of a particular religious affiliation.

I have argued (see Kucukozer 2007), using Turkey as a case study, that weak states in the face of crisis often compromise their autonomy, allowing parts of their bureaucracies to be captured by certain social groups with political agendas in order to increase some level of their state capacities. In turn, such a development can lead to greater social tension and violence. I argue in chapter four that Mexico, similar to Turkey in the twentieth century, also sold some measure of its state autonomy to key local elites and certain large landed interests in Chiapas so that it could obtain some increase in its state capacity in that region.

Together, state capacity and state autonomy, analyzed historically, along with the changing cultural/ideological foundations of the state and geopolitical factors, provide a means of studying the processes of state building. In our case, we are interested in state building as it relates to the history of peripheral regions in order to explore the social underpinnings of peasant-based movements in places like Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan. These regions are

“peripheral” because they have always been in the shadow of some central state power without ever being fully incorporated into its sovereignty. Weak central states, with low state capacity, have failed to impose a monopoly of violence in those regions. Consequently, those regions have been the site of constant struggles for power between emerging states and local, often rapacious, elites. The populations of these regions have consequently had to deal with a continuously precarious and tension-filled existence. Continuous tension and periodic flare-ups of violence have prevented the broadening of trust networks for long-term development goals. The social significance of “peripheralization”⁵ into the twentieth century is the formation of significant social divisions among the marginalized rural populations from which the EZLN and the PKK have been able to grow. Chapter III compares the historical processes of peripheralization for Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan since the sixteenth century as both regions began to fall under the hegemony of emerging states within a developing international state system.

2.3 Method of Study

As discussed, identifying and explaining the mechanisms of shifting identities requires bridging the histories of state and structural change (histories of above) with the histories of social interaction (histories of below). Oral histories are one effective way to bring out the “underside” of history, provide a “fuller human” view, bringing into relief the more intimate details of human interaction and their changes over time; “[h]istory becomes, to put it simply, more democratic” (Thompson 1998 [1988]:26).

During my time in Turkey from September 2006 to October 2006, in the cities of Istanbul and Diyarbakir (the unofficial capital of Turkish Kurdistan), through contacts in various kinds of

⁵This is the term that the anthropologist Andrés Aubry (2005:70) uses, borrowing from Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-systems approach, to explain the history of Chiapas since the Spanish colonial period.

civil society and social movement organizations⁶ (cultural, research, social service, human rights, and a political party), I carried out semi-structured interviews with 22 persons, seven of them women, who originated from the villages in the various parts of Turkey's Kurdish region. Included among the respondents were ex-insurgents, ex-members of the PKK, sympathizers, and more neutral witnesses who could speak about village life, in the context of their own lives, and the various kinds of changes that have taken place over the years, and how they came to join or support the movement, or witnessed how it grew. All of them, however, were impacted in some way by the conflict.

In London, U.K. from the end of October 2006 to November 2006, I interviewed six more persons, three women, through contacts from two organizations that served the cultural and social service needs of the Turkish-Kurdish community. These respondents, again, were PKK ex-insurgents, sympathizers, and witnesses who originated from the villages of Turkish Kurdistan. They had arrived in England, having fled the conflict and/or repression. Finally, I interviewed one Turkish-Kurdish person from Germany doing an internship in New York City in May 2007. He had been a student-activist on behalf of the PKK back in Turkey.

I was in Chiapas from January 2007 to February 2007 and in January 2008, during which time eight persons⁷ were interviewed, one woman among them, through contacts I had made through a research center located in San Cristóbal de Las Casas. The respondents here included a

⁶ I will not provide the name of the organizations in order to protect the confidentiality of their identities.

⁷ Chiapas proved to be a more difficult place to obtain interviews than Turkey. This is due, I suspect, to a number of reasons. But primarily, because the Mexican state militarily allowed the EZLN to claim an autonomous region, the movement itself was not forced to become more diffuse geographically and evolve into different forms. The PKK, on the other hand, because of the mass displacement of the rural population to the cities has had to evolve into various civil society and social movement organizations that are found in different cities throughout Turkey. These organizations serve to engage the public from different angles in a decentralized manner, making it easier for people like me to establish contacts with prospective respondents. Since the EZLN is the central power in the autonomous region, decisions about how to engage outsiders have to go through a formal bureaucratic apparatus. Finally, the EZLN's centralized structure has also meant that it directly tries to control the discourse and propaganda of the resistance. That is why there was a general nervousness and suspicion, whether in San Cristóbal or in the villages, about talking to me.

current member of the EZLN, an ex-insurgent, two ex-members, one who worked in recruitment and another who joined because they promised him a plot of land for cultivation, a sympathizer who briefly flirted with joining and came to know several members of the militant group, a priest who has served the indigenous communities in the Lacandón Forest for over thirty years and had witnessed the emergence of the movement, a well-known scholar/historian of the region who as an academic and former priest had come to know several of the prominent leaders of the EZLN, and, finally, the former director of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Human Rights Center who had a history of working in the rural communities of the Lacandón Forest during the 1980s. Aside from the priest, the academic, and the former head of the human rights center, the respondents either lived in the rural indigenous communities or originated from there. The respondents were also of the various Mayan ethnic groups.

Due to few interviews obtained in Chiapas, I complimented my interview data with oral histories and interviews in textual format in the primary source language (Spanish). On the PKK, I obtained, while in Istanbul, published accounts in Turkish of the insurgency and the lives of the militants, taken from their own diaries and journals, an autobiographical novel by Fevzi Yetkin (2006), a former insurgent who wrote of the emergence of the PKK in the city/town of Hilvan and a nearby village of Şah during the late 1970s, and a book of interviews with family members of fallen militants and others who got caught up in the conflict. Further, at the Kurdish Library in Brooklyn, N.Y. and at the bookstore of one of the Kurdish organizations in London, I found biographical sketches of fallen PKK guerrillas within the organization's *Serxwebun* publication, which is published in Germany in the Turkish language. Finally, I have made extensive use of several secondary-source histories and analyses in both the primary-source languages and English.

Utilizing oral histories can present certain challenges. They can easily take the form of “standard stories,”⁸ which are accounts or narratives of social life in which the narrator treats the characters “as independent, conscious, and self-motivated,” whose actions deliberated in a particular social setting and time are the cause of all significant effects and outcomes (Tilly 2002:28). Often standard stories deal with interpretations of history in which certain outcomes, such as national identity, are considered “natural” or “organic,” rather than socially constructed or contingent. Such stories can obscure much of what social science intends to discover, the “indirect, unintended, collective, and environmentally mediated” factors within social processes (Tilly 2002:28).

Standard stories also raise the issue of the role of ideology in revolutionary mobilization. Perhaps the literature on religious conversion can shed some light on the impact of ideology of how people come to join or support a movement. Rodney Stark (1996) notes that until the 1960s, the conventional view in the social sciences on successful religious conversion was that ideology spoke to the deprivation suffered by those who were converting. Social scientists certainly have applied this view of the purpose of ideology to revolutionary movements as well—a position common to the moral economy perspective of peasant rebellion, which some have strongly criticized (see Popkin 1979, Wickham-Crowley 1992). In displacing ideology as a main causal factor, what Stark argues for religious conversion is compelling for our understanding of revolutionary mobilization: “*Conversion to new, deviant religious groups occurs when, other*

⁸ The fact that the EZLN and the PKK are on-going movements of fairly recent origin also fosters a narrative that takes the form of standard stories. Some of my respondents have clearly identified with the movements and discuss them as purposeful entities. Others who have been afflicted by the conflict have only wanted to talk about how they have been victimized by the state and its local allies, and saw me as someone who could “save” them by telling their stories. As a result, I sometimes found myself losing control of the interviews in the sense that I could not get my respondents to focus on the questions. I certainly do not want to make light of anybody’s suffering, and I continue to struggle about how to present this study such that the depth of the human experience is more fully represented. I tried to impress on my respondents that my interest is to reflect the human experience as a collective human experience by pooling their individual histories of social interaction and changing social ties into a broader picture.

things being equal, people have or develop stronger attachments to members of the group than they have to nonmembers” (1996:18; italics are the author’s). Similarly, it is my view that conversion to a revolutionary movement is also dependent on social networks. The question is how those networks develop and what makes them meaningful for the actors involved.

Zafer Rojin’s (2003) account of how his older sister started her path to the PKK provides a taste of how the analysis in this study will proceed. The story begins in the start of the summer of 1988 when he was just six years old. Their village, called Gundikê Remo, is located on a “strategic plateau” on the northern side of the Cudi Mountains. The villagers would take their sheep out to summer pasture on communal fields located in the woods “above” the village. Zafer was on his way with his flock and three friends who were children like him. Deep within the forest and far from the village they ran into three armed guerrilla fighters. The fighters spoke with them. This is where the standard story and ideological portion of the story begins. Zafer (2003:254) writes, “They spoke of something that he did not understand up until that day, about a side of me where there was a void. And for the first time, from among a people who lost all sense of themselves for hundreds of years, I understood that I was a Kurd... A happiness enveloped me.”

Zafer recounts that upon arriving home he decided to tell the story to his older sister Gurbet, the person he was closest to within the family. He secretly whispered everything he saw and heard that day in her ear. They spoke until nightfall. The story seemed to be a justification for everything she felt until then. We discover that she was not happy with the “feudal” conditions in the village and the family. There had been conflict. Her rebelliousness only grew from that day forward, and one day she just disappeared. She had left for the mountains to join the insurgency.

There is, certainly, much missing from this story in terms of Gurbet's life history. What we can surmise is that there was conflict in the family and village. We also know that at least an indirect link with the PKK had formed for Gurbet through Zafer. Perhaps other links were there or developed soon after Zafer recounted his experience with the insurgents. Despite the gaps in what we know of Gurbet's life, we do get a sense of the mechanisms involved in pushing her towards the PKK by taking a relational approach. There were instances of intra-family and intra-village conflict. The story provides some knowledge of how social ties to the insurgency can begin. The story also tells us something of the kinds of villages from where the movement could recruit—more isolated villages located in geographically difficult areas. This will help us begin to resolve some of the bigger questions such as the impact of further capitalist penetration in the countryside on the growth of peasant insurgencies, and the kinds of peasants attracted to the movement.

Relational analysis offers a means by which to circumvent some of the challenges posed by oral histories. My questions are designed to bring to light the changing nature of social ties and interactions, which to some degree obviates the problem of oral histories themselves turning into descriptions or explanations of social processes. Plus, having a variety of respondents with varying perspectives and relationships with the insurgency movements will provide significance to shared experiences among the participants. Finally, the oral histories are not viewed as isolated or self-contained units. I see them completely in the context of emerging histories developed through the analysis of scholarly studies. In this way, I hope to fill in the gaps of the emerging histories with the pieces provided by the oral histories and vice-versa.

2.4 Limitations of Study

Doing oral histories is a practical response to the limitations of time and funding. More conclusive findings certainly would come with extensive travel in the regions of question, engaging in a geographical, historical, and political survey of the communities and sub-regions from where individual insurgents, from among a sample of insurgents (which I collected in the PKK case), originated. Sub-regional variation in the growth and support of the movements can tell us much about how the insurgencies grew. Due to the current political climate in both countries, such an approach at the moment would be very difficult to carry out.

Carrying out studies of any insurgency movement, particularly ongoing ones, by their nature pose limitations to their study. Guerrilla uprisings are composed of “secret histories” (Vázquez & Vázquez 2006) that may be impossible to fully penetrate. Stories are further contaminated by standard stories and ideological agendas. Furthermore, the small sample of cases of comparative analysis means that such studies fall short of proffering “a universally applicable social theory whose propositions are substantively meaningful and hold under specified conditions independent of time and place” (Rueschemeyer 2003:332). Consequently, I see this project as the beginning of a series of research projects that will delve deeper into the nature of rural insurgencies during the age of globalization.

In terms of further research, the reasons as to why the PKK’s conflict with the state led to greater levels of violence and a more protracted war than in the EZLN case deserves attention as a separate study. It has also been argued that women have played a significant role in the EZLN and PKK insurgencies (Berger 2001, Kampwirth 2002, Marcus 2007). The cases of women in the PKK should be compared with the literature that already exists (see Kampwirth 2002) on the participation of women in Latin American guerrilla movements in order to provide new insight

into the underlying causes of greater female participation. Further comparisons with past era uprisings should be made to determine to what degree the participation of a large number of female fighters is a wholly new phenomenon. Comparative analyses can also be carried out with other peasant-based revolts in the Third World, such as the Shining Path in Peru or the Moros of the Philippines, in order to further identify common mechanisms of peasant mobilization.

Ideological questions can be dealt with such as why some movements have taken on the language and goals of pan-ethnicity, while others have stayed exclusively class-based, and yet others have turned to religious justifications. We know that Catholic Liberation Theology has played an important role in the ideological formation of the EZLN, but we do not know what role Islam has played for the PKK. Finally, the impact that counter-hegemonic movements such as the EZLN and the PKK have had on the ongoing processes of democratization in their respective countries should also form the basis of future independent studies.

This dissertation will limit its focus on the whole to the connections that can be made between the process of peripheralization, the changing nature of social interactions among rural society, and the formation of new social ties, in order to identify the mechanisms of shifting political identities behind the emergence and growth of the EZLN and the PKK. As I go along, I hope to reevaluate existing theories on peasant-based rebellions that have tried to answer the fundamental questions of who, how, and why.

Chapter III

The Peripheralization of Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan: Sixteenth Century to the Early Twentieth Century

Comparative studies of revolutionary movements of the Cold War era have focused on peripheral states, defined as states ‘whose power and projects are more or less strictly determined or at least very tightly constrained by a much more powerful “core” or “metropolitan” state (or states) within the state system’ (Jeff Goodwin 2001:15). The same definition has been extended to regions or subregions within peripheral states--“the periphery of the periphery” or “the underdevelopment of underdevelopment” (White 2000, Aydin 1986)—in which such regions have been constrained by their more powerful, although internationally weak, central states.

The purpose of this chapter is to go beyond discussing peripheral states or regions as social spaces where revolutionary movements emerge, and instead focus on the historical process of peripheralization that allowed for the formation of distinct social and political conditions conducive for the rise of counter-hegemonic movements such as the EZLN and the PKK. Various studies have shown a strong association between peripheral states and regions and revolutionary movements (see Goodwin 2001, Parsa 2000, Skocpol 1979, Paige 1975, Migdal 1974, Wolf 1999 [1969]). If that is the case, then there must be some kind of connection between the processes by which these places became peripheral and the processes by which revolutionary movements emerge in the late twentieth century. This chapter is about explicating how those processes are linked.

We can begin by understanding what it means to be peripheral, which is to be a “place apart”¹ (structurally and socially distinct) within a larger national state. How a region becomes a place apart, in turn, requires focusing on processes of state formation and state-society dynamics in contexts, for the most part, overlooked by scholars. For too long, only “successful,” or western European, models of state building have been the subject of history, while other, “less successful” models have been ignored or viewed dismissively (Pamuk 2004, Barkey 1994). Martin Van Bruinessen (1992:174), the anthropologist and one of the foremost scholars of Kurdish society, for instance writes, “To date, little attention has been given to the flourishing of such semi-independent political units in the periphery of empires or in the buffer zone between the two empires.” The same point is made in effect by the anthropologist Andrés Aubry (2005:107) as he has spearheaded a new generation of scholars working on Chiapas: ‘From its creation as an artificial region in the beginning of the sixteenth century, Chiapas was invented by the conquistadors as the “Delimiting Province”; that is to say, it was structured as a shadow, as a periphery, so that the conquistadors would not become too ambitious. A periphery can be forgotten by the historians, or unappreciated for its sources, but not so by the strategists.’²

Some recent studies have begun to rectify the problem. The political geographer Maria O’Shea (2004), for instance, analyzes the historical development of the conceptual and political formation of contemporary “Kurdistan” since its beginnings as “a buffer

¹Mario Humberto Ruz (2004:68) discusses the historical formation of Chiapas as a “place apart, anachronistic in many senses, but constantly changing, always with new identities, wounds, and new fractures.”

² The anthropologist Robert Wasserstrom (1989 [1983]) provides a similar lament of the scholarly tradition in Chiapas founded by the University of Chicago anthropologist Sol Tax who treated indigenous communities as self-contained homogenous units, existing outside of history—“a people without history.”

zone” between the expanding Ottoman Empire and the rival Persian Safavid Empire starting in the sixteenth century. Similarly, Aubry (2005), as noted, discusses the creation of Chiapas as the *Provincia de los Confines* (the delimiting or confining province) following its *conquista* in the sixteenth century. The official application of the title above indicates that Chiapas, tied to the more directly ruled Audience of Guatemala, was to serve the Spanish colonial Empire as a buffer to the power and potential rivalry of the larger and more autonomous entity of New Spain (Mexico).

What cannot be overlooked is that the Ottoman and Spanish Colonial imperial rule persisted for a few centuries and implemented institutional styles. Institutional structures tend to transcend regime types (Spruyt 2002), which, in turn, justifies the Braudelian long-term approach to understanding the making of (peripheralization) the political and social structures that gave rise to the EZLN and PKK movements.

Scholars have interpreted the western European example of state formation as a process of institutional change which has served the purposes of resource extraction in order to pay for war. In the process they eliminated the capacities of local elites to challenge state power and each other. By establishing greater dependency on the populations from which resources were extracted, states formed institutional structures that have brought law and order, provided public goods, and reinvestment that have fostered long-term economic growth (see Pamuk 2004, Waldner 1999, Tilly 1992 & 2004, Spruyt 2002). But Spanish colonial Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan reflect that institutions of rule that promote the transfer of resources from one group without promoting economic growth and production can survive for centuries and leave a lasting mark on political and social structures.

Fundamentally, the prebendal nature of both empires—their centers having to depend on local surrogates and clients to run matters in their respective regions of Chiapas and Southeastern Anatolia—signified their inability to impose a monopoly of violence in the Weberian sense and thus prevent continuous conflict among local elites. This is because empires evince low levels of state capacity and high levels of state autonomy.³ Consequently, the presence of competing violences has in turn fostered loose, informal, and personalized governmental administrations and bureaucracies. Local populations have consequently been at the whim of coercive and rapacious elites, and have suffered through ongoing conditions of lawlessness.⁴ Peripheralization has therefore meant the inability of the respective states to broaden trust networks, in the Tillian sense, in order to facilitate long-term development goals.

The local elites are the product of buffer-zone dynamics, turning them into caudillos with feudal-like powers,⁵ as they are propped up militarily by sponsoring states, or emboldened by opportunities as states are distracted by challenges from rival states or other upstart caudillos. Such processes, therefore, are closely intertwined with the geopolitics of an emerging international state system, which had a hand in creating and providing significance to the political entities of Chiapas and Kurdistan in the sixteenth century with the establishment of the Spanish colonial empire and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire.

³ See Chapter II for definitions of these two variables. Jeff Goodwin (2001:11) also provides a discussion on Weber's classification of regime types. Patrimonial empires would certainly fall under the Weberian category of *sultanism* which is marked by high levels of state autonomy. In comparison to national states, which emerged later, empires are marked by low levels of state capacity.

⁴ The historian Antonio García de León (2002 [1985]), for example, describes the history of Chiapas as an ongoing "western."

⁵ The literature on the history of Kurdistan widely discusses the formation of feudal-like structures as the result of Ottoman alliances and support for favored Kurdish principalities since the sixteenth century (see Hakan 2002, Ferman 1989, O'Shea 2004, McDowall 1996).

Peripheralization creates and thrives on high levels of political fragmentation.⁶ It is ultimately this ongoing condition of profound political fragmentation that lays the sociological foundations for counter-hegemonic movements. Indeed, there already exists a basis to support the argument. Charles Tilly (1980[1974]: 37) rejects, in his *The Vendée*, the belief that the region's counter-revolutionary movement in 1793 against the emerging French Republic was possible because it was the most "backward" in terms of urbanization. Instead, he notes, "it would not be preposterous to hold that violent resistance to the party in power was most likely to occur where interests were most deeply divided, factions most sharply defined, to the viewpoint to this study: where urbanization had been both vigorous and uneven." In Turkish Kurdistan it is because of the high levels of political fractiousness that the Turkish-Kurdish sociologist Ali Kemal Özcan (2006), in his study of the PKK's growth as a mass movement, goes so far as to essentialize the Kurdish character as treasonous for their betrayal of what he deems to be more organic national ideals. Similarly, Chiapan history is replete with examples of indigenous soldiers, in the service of white or Ladino rulers, used to kill and repress other Indians. Jan Rus (1996:67) writes, for example, of certain Indians during the "Caste War" of 1869-70, "In their eagerness to prove themselves, these 'loyal' Indians were even more ruthless than their ladino masters at hunting down and killing their fellows."

But, where do these sharp social and political divisions come from? They are the product of incomplete state building or "peripheralization." Relatively weak central states, in the process of trying to augment their state capacities in regions at the edge of their power but failing to fully establish a monopoly on the use of violence, foster the

⁶ MacLeod (2004:99) writes, "Chiapas is distinct from other peripheral provinces in the Spanish colonial system for its high levels of competition between factions."

formation of sharp political and social divisions that form the basis for violent counter-hegemonic movements.

The interpretation of peripheralization set forth here, based on the histories of Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan, falls in line with the views of core-periphery relations in the field of political geography in which such relations fundamentally revolve around spaces of confrontation. But it strays from the “alternative” argument which defines the core-periphery relationship in terms of a global economy—Wallerstein’s world systems approach (see O’Shea 2004:20-22). The global economy creates a core of high wages, improving technology, and a diversified system of production, whereas the periphery suffers from low wages, low technology, and simpler forms of production.

In my view, echoing Tilly’s argument, economic “backwardness” is not the cause of peripheralization, but the byproduct. For example, due to the constant struggles for domination in Chiapas, Aubry (2005:116) writes that by the time of the post-independence of nineteenth century Mexico, as the advent of global capitalism was coming into full-swing, land in Chiapas, ironically, did not symbolize the possession of capital, but the basis of power.⁷ O’Shea’s (2004) discussion of Kurdistan as a “buffer zone” well into the nineteenth century more than implies a system that marked that territory as a constant struggle for domination rather than capitalist development.

Such a view of peripheralization, then, has significance for the literature on peasant-based rebellions and revolutions because it helps to problematize or even subvert

⁷ Additionally, Gudrun Lenkersdorf (2004:85) writes of the establishing Spanish colonial system in Chiapas, “The new colonial society that was forming did not simply base itself on economic exploitation of the majority by a very small minority, but on terror and the most absolute disregard for the autonomous existence of the population, whose resistance against the conquerors persisted and took on a multitude of forms, according to the circumstances, on either side of the sylvan border of the Spanish Empire.”

one of the fundamental premises of the field—that capitalist imperialism is the key factor behind the emergence of such movements.

This chapter discusses state formation and state-society dynamics in Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan until the end of the nineteenth century, setting the stage for both regions to face the nationalist revolutions of their respective states, Mexico (1910-1921) and Turkey (1908-1923) which marked their transition to modern republics. These two cases represent patterns of state building that stray from the patterns identified for Europe. In order to understand how, the following section reviews European forms of modern state creation as a comparative framework for the Chiapan and Ottoman Kurdish experience. The sections to follow discuss the histories of Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan in terms of state-society dynamics, which provide the details of how peripheralization occurred in the two regions.

3.1 Patterns of State Building

The common definition of modern states stems from the European experience, which is seen as a function of war-making and the struggle for domination: “coercion-wielding organizations that are distinct from households and kinship groups and exercise clear priority in some respects over all other organizations within substantial territories” (Tilly 1992:1). The building up and consolidation of coercion then became the foundation for territorial sovereignty, a system of organization that proved more effective than feudalism in the emerging and competitive international state system of the seventeenth century. Sovereignty “reduced cooperation and coordination problems between rulers and ruled, as well as between subjects themselves. Social and economic life became regularized,

and transaction and information costs were reduced” (Spruyt 2002:139). Consequently, the establishment of sovereignty, or the “unified, direct, and relatively homogenous rule over a certain territory,” required that “state makers...establish formal structural differentiation and an administration loyal to the center and staffed by officials independent of kinship, tribal, and other class or cultural groups” (Barkey 1994:3). More succinctly put, sovereignty is the transitioning from mediated to unmediated states (Waldner 1999).

According to David Waldner, mediated states depend on local elites as surrogates to carry out the functions of state. Since these local elites are autonomous in their access to resources, they are responsible on behalf of the state for the collection of taxes, manning and maintaining a military, coining currency, and imposing law and order. Such levels of local authority also give the local elites a certain amount of leverage in dealing with the power of the central state. Consequently, state agents have had to bargain with local elites, and in some cases conspire with them against other local elites.

The implementation of sovereignty, or the transition from mediated to unmediated states, proceeded along some general patterns. Territorial consolidation preceded institutional changes and the formation of new networks that supplanted local notables and established direct links to social groups and classes—what Tilly (2004) calls the establishment of “trust networks.” A mutual dependence emerged: the state setup a tax system directly extracting resources from the population, contracted agents from among societal classes and groups to operate its new institutional networks, and in turn the state became a provider of public goods, investing in infrastructure, regulating the economy (including long-distance trade, and to a certain degree shielding the local population from

the impact of the international economy) and other forms of social interaction (see Waldner 1999, Barkey 1994).

How these patterns play out depends on the coercive capacity of the state, the class structure of the society, and the geographic/demographic variables of the region where state sovereignty is being imposed. Among rural areas in Europe, the state has had to deal with the nobility and the cultivating populations. Tilly (1992) identified three broad categories of state building. Coercion-intensive states, more common in Eastern Europe, where there was a thinly spread rural population over a large territory, the state used force to extract resources from this population. Capital-intensive states (the form taken by the Italian city-states) closely worked with merchant classes to obtain resources. The third form, found mainly among the Atlantic states of England and France, utilized a combination of coercion and capital, because of the greater variation in their populations, for the purposes of state building.

Tilly (1992) also provides marked periods that identify the stages of transition from mediated to unmediated states. Patrimonialism took the form of kings seeking tribute and rents from subjects living on their immediate territories, and it called for personal service from vassals and other subordinates, but within strict contractual limits. The era of “brokerage” followed, 1400-1700. Here independent capitalists were called on for loans, managing enterprises of significant income production, and for collecting taxes. In terms of coercion, the use of mercenaries contracted from freewheeling businessmen was the hallmark of the era of brokerage. The eighteenth century saw the rise of “nationalization,” where mediated states made considerable institutional advances towards their unmediated form. Financial institutions were being formed and integrated

into the state apparatus while independent contractors were pushed out. During nationalization native militaries were created and integrated into the administrative structure. By the middle of the nineteenth century “specialization” arrived, marked by a greater separation between the fiscal and military layers of state, and greater government control over infrastructure. Civilian bureaucracies were consolidated for logistical planning of infrastructure, social/public services, and war.

In this chapter I hope to make a case for a fourth pattern of state building, what I call “negotiated intensive”⁸ (see also Barkey 1994, Waldner 1999) for the Spanish colonial (and the new and struggling Mexican state in the nineteenth century) and Ottoman empires in terms of their struggles to incorporate their peripheral regions of Chiapas and Kurdistan. It is clear that Tilly’s categories of state building are ideal-types; such processes do not take shape uniformly throughout the varied regions within any state. Certain regions prove more problematic for the larger state-building interests of their respective states. Mexico and Turkey, being the product of far-reaching patrimonial empires that transitioned relatively late towards national states, clearly stand outside of the historical patterns of state building that apply to Tilly’s Europe. These states, particularly in relation to Chiapas and Kurdistan, as the histories below will show, did not accomplish any significant transitions to unmediated structures of state by the end of the

⁸ David Waldner (1999:22) quotes Weber extensively on the patrimonial power having to deal or compromise with regional elites such as tribal chieftains, religious leaders, or large landlords. The reason for this need to compromise had to do with military and bureaucratic deficiencies of the patrimonial power that could put in place a new administration. The coercive capacities of local elites were also formidable.

Ostensibly, my classification of “negotiated intensive” state building comes from Waldner’s (1999:22) own words: “In mediated states, local elites performed many of the functions that we associate with sovereign states, ranging from tax collection to military recruitment, from coining money to adjudicating disputes. Local elites were able to discharge these functions because they enjoyed autonomous control over socioeconomic resources. But this control gave them power not only over local populations but also vis-à-vis the state, obliging state agents to bargain with local elites over the terms of collaboration, especially the distribution of surplus extracted from local producers. State builders relentlessly worked to expand and institutionalize their authority, but until relatively recently, they could only temporarily dispense with local elites as their agents.”

nineteenth century. Mexico and Turkey began this process in earnest only after their nationalist revolutions following the second decade of the twentieth century.

Thus, while Europe started on the processes of state building by the sixteenth century, the Spanish colonial and Ottoman empires were negotiating, making alliances, and conspiring with local elites against other local elites in Chiapas and Kurdistan. Making alliances did not mean that the Spanish crown and the Ottoman sultanate did not test these relationships and look to impose more heavily on the local elites. Similarly, local elites also looked to often tacitly renegotiate the terms of the agreement when opportunities presented themselves, as when the central state found itself distracted or in crisis. The central states looked to manage a difficult situation more through craftiness rather than direct coercion.

Certainly, the Spanish were able to largely displace the traditional Indian notables of Chiapas by the seventeenth century, but the Spanish colonialists, soon after their conquest of Chiapas, became a new set of entrenched local elites, who, in turn, propagated a new set of indigenous elites who were willing to do their bidding. Consequently, Chiapas and Kurdistan became ruled by autonomous elites with considerable local authority who could have considerable leverage in dealing with their central states. Because of increasing international challenges to the Spanish crown and Ottoman sultanate in the seventeenth century, Chiapas and Kurdistan continued in their unmediated forms, and increasing competition between the local elites signified greater conflict and violence between elites and significantly higher levels of oppression and violence for the local populations.

Because the Spanish colonial and Ottoman states could never impose a monopoly of violence or coercion over the regions of Chiapas and Kurdistan, violence constantly emanated from various sources, preventing the build up of institutions that could effectively regulate society and provide public goods to them. This is the basis for the peripheralization of Chiapas and Kurdistan.

Interestingly, Kevin Gosner (1996b) for Chiapas and Karen Barkey (1994) for Ottoman Anatolia note how in both cases counter-hegemonic peasant uprisings were relatively uncommon in comparison with Europe starting in the sixteenth century. The question is, why? The centers of both these empires utilized surrogates and agents in order to carry out policies that could continue to favor the hegemonic interests of loyalty and tribute collection, without eliminating local elites or their coercive capacities. In effect, these empires outsourced violence to these local elites in order to protect their borders and ensure some level of stability of the corresponding regions. Therefore, negotiated-intensive state building is a coercively deficient process. Although central states have tried and were arguably somewhat successful in gradually increasing their coercive capacities in these regions, they have never quite brought about a state monopoly on the use of violence. In terms of developing capital, the bureaucracies of both empires sought essentially to not overly disrupt the political and social order in the region as this could lead to challenges to the central authority. In other words, the central states evinced low levels of state capacity and high levels of state autonomy.

Instead, as the surrogates engaged in violence against rivals, often viciously oppressing local populations, or saw invasions by foreign powers, the central states were largely not seen as the enemy by the local populations who suffered at the hands of the

surrogates or those allied with foreign interests. Local elites, caudillos, bandits, or foreign powers and their regional allies were. The central states were seen as largely autonomous entities in regards to the actions of the local troublemakers.

Consequently, Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan did not experience significant counter-hegemonic uprisings by the local peasant populations. The indigenous rebellion of 1712 in Chiapas was not counter-hegemonic in the sense that it was resisting the growing power of the Spanish state. Instead the leaders of the movement utilized their Christian beliefs to argue that the local Spanish/Creole elites were traitors to the true Christian principles of the Spanish crown. Indeed, the movements for greater autonomy in both Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan in the nineteenth century (the so-called “Caste War” of 1868-69 in Chiapas and the Sheik Ubaydallah uprising of 1878-79 in Kurdistan) were more opportunistic than counter-hegemonic, the product of ambitious local chieftains and/or movements seeking alternatives to the lawlessness and violence afflicting their regions.

3.2 Opportunistic Conquest: A Comparative Historical Analysis of Peripheralization

Chiapas and Kurdistan at the turn of the sixteenth century both were outside the control of any imperial center, and were marked by strong rivalries between tribes and kingdoms. The Spanish and the Ottomans carefully played the situation in order to establish a foothold in these regions.

The Chiapaneca Indians, for example, had arrived in the region in the sixth century and established themselves as the most powerful and organized entity at the time of the Spanish arrival in 1524, having taken control by constant war-making and

expulsion of the Zoque and Tzotzil Indians all along the tributaries of the Chiapa river located in the Alto Grijalva Depression (see Map I of the Appendix) (see De Vos 1996). They had also successfully resisted Aztec dominance emanating from their capital in Tenochtitlan. They expanded their areas of control to the river valleys and mountain passes of the south of Chiapas. Jan De Vos (1996:14) also notes that the Chiapanecans “imposed a regime of terror upon their neighbors, especially the Zoques and Tzotziles, whom they continuously attacked in their search for slaves and victims for human sacrifice,” disrupting the elaborate system of trade established in Chiapas and its neighboring regions (see Wasserstrom 1989[1983]).

The poverty of the colonial period that followed is evidence enough. The colonizers found themselves frustrated with the prospects of becoming wealthy quickly. The Lacandón was impenetrable,⁹ there were no mines, and the lack of communication links and access to ports prevented significant administrative and economic integration into the region (Aubry 2005). Consequently, many Spaniards repatriated back to Spain, went to New Spain to pursue wealth in the mines, or went to Guatemala for political appointments.¹⁰

Kurdistan, similar to Chiapas, was an area of constant struggle and warfare following the Arab Islamic invasion of AD 642. Although many tribes converted to Islam and accepted Arab dominance, they frequently rose in rebellion for the next 300 years and fought against each other for dominance. Their prowess as soldiers made them

⁹ García de León (1994[1985]:46) writes that a series of military campaigns trying to pacify the Indians of the Lacandón starting in 1534 largely failed and formed a de facto border for the Spanish that only started to be breached by the beginning of the twentieth century.

¹⁰ Gosner (1996:30) talks of a prolonged period of economic depression in Chiapas and writes, “For Chiapas, the most telling indicator of the seriousness of the economic downturn is the sharp drop in the Spanish population of Ciudad Real from 280 *vecinos* in 1620 to only 50 by 1659.”

valuable for the Islamic militaries and officer corps (O'Shea 2004). In this context, and because of the difficult mountainous terrain, the tribal warrior class came to dominate the region. This caste also looked down on the non-tribal peasantry (*reyet*) and the urban dwellers who thus constituted the lower segments of society. O'Shea (2004:76) notes that Kurdistan had "a rigid and undeveloped social and economic system," falling victim to frequent inroads by raiding armies because it lay at the crossroads between Iran and Mesopotamia.

Dynasties came and went in Kurdistan. The Abbasid caliphate started its decline in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The Turkish Seljuk dynasty arrived at the end of the eleventh century and were the first to impose "ruthless" central control over the area, and created the first officially recognized Kurdish province (O'Shea 2004:77). Still, the various Kurdish tribes continued to serve as mercenaries of whichever dynasty or empire could call on their services for the next 300 years. But the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century proved disastrous for the region. The economy of Kurdistan crumbled as cities were destroyed and cultivation abandoned. As a survival mechanism in the face of invading armies, the nomadic style of social organization grew. The emergence of sea routes of trade following Portuguese explorations at the end of the fifteenth century continued to debilitate the infrastructure in Kurdistan where land routes of trade had existed.

Shah Ismail I (1501-1518), the first Safavid Shah of Persia, unleashed a bloody campaign of conquest upon Kurdistan. The rulers of the Kurdish kingdoms or emirates that resisted were destroyed, and those who did not were exiled (O'Shea 2004). The Safavids sought to convert the populations to Shiism with the support of the Turkomen

Kizilbash tribes, who constituted the brunt of the Safavid military. By 1507 they had imposed their might as far west as Maraş, and far south and east as Mosul and Baghdad by 1508.

Both the Spanish crown and the Ottoman sultanate had a manpower shortage in trying to conquer these regions far from their centers of power (see McDowall 1996 for the Ottoman case). They both sought alliances with local kingdoms and tribes in order to conquer and maintain suzerainty in their new peripheries. The Spanish warlords, for instance, had a meeting in 1522 with the Indian ruler of Zinacantán (a kingdom that consisted of Tzotzil and Zoque Indians) in the town of Espiritu Santo (today's Coatzacoalcos, founded by Hernán Cortés) in order to come to terms on a joint military action into Chiapas. The Zinacantán were eager for the alliance, as they wanted to put an end to the constant military incursions by the Chiapanecan Indians (Aubry 2005).

Sent by Hernán Cortés, Pedro de Alvarado arrived in then Guatemala's Soconusco (today part of Chiapas) region from where he was to invade Eastern Chiapas, namely the areas around today's Comitán, Huistán, and parts of the Lacandon Jungle. Luis Marín invaded from Tabasco, and the Zoque Indians invaded from around Quechula (which is today under water due to the Malpaso dam). After the "butchering" (Aubry 2005:64) of the Chiapa Indians in their capital city of Chiapa, the Zinacantans aided the conquistadors in capturing Chamula. Bernal Díaz del Castillo led the attack. The Spanish failed in solidifying control for four years until 1528 under the leadership of Diego Mazariegos who was able to impose some degree of Spanish control over the center of Chiapas.

Mazariegos, as a latecomer and pawn of the Spanish crown, outmaneuvered the conquistadors that had arrived earlier. His military encampment, Villa Real, became the new political center in Chiapas, located just below the central highlands. But the Villa Real (soon to become Ciudad Real, and later San Cristóbal de las Casas) as the new capital reflected the “arbitrary” political decisions of a faction of the Spanish functionaries at the expense of the conquistadors (Lenkersdorf 2004:81), who then became both embittered and resistant to the new political leadership set up by the crown. These political divisions were the first political fissures setting the stage for the proceeding colonial history of Chiapas.

Chiapas, as a political entity, is the “invention” (Aubry 2005:66) of Mazariegos who received ratification by the crown following the negotiations of Huistán in 1531. Chiapas constituted a “conglomeration of different Mayan, Chiapan, and Zoque communities without any kind of geographic, economic, ethnic, or political unity” (Lenkersdorf 2004:81), and without any access to the sea (with Soconusco officially designated as part of the province of Guatemala). The administrative center of Villa Real was cutoff and isolated from the larger Spanish empire, and home to Spaniards who were deeply divided internally. These colonialists, aware of their tenuous position, far from the centers of Spanish power, were fearful of the hostility of the surrounding Indian communities. That insecurity fed the *encomienda* system of military domination, which essentially established a feudal-like structure, giving the *encomenderos* unlimited right to oppress, exploit, and enslave the Indian population.

The Ottoman sultan Selim I (the Grim), whose empire had also slowly expanded towards the east as the Safavids expanded westward prior to his rise to the throne in

1512, saw the Persians as their primary rival in the region. Through the service of a Kurdish diplomat, Idris Bitlisi, the son of a highly respected and well-known religious mystic, Selim won the allegiance of many Kurdish emirs in advance of his invasion. The Sunni religious affiliation certainly aided in this process. The Ottoman victory at the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 reversed the establishment of Persian power that came with their conquest of Baghdad in 1508. Selim rewarded Kurdish military assistance with a formal pact which was to last for the next two centuries. The pact gave official recognition to sixteen¹¹ Kurdish emirates (*Kurt Hukümet-i*), or principalities, of various sizes composed of sedentary Kurds, and fifty Kurdish *sanjaqs* (counties, districts, or fiefdoms) covering about thirty percent of Kurdistan. The Ottomans also created nomadic tribal confederations (*uluslar*), with most of the tribes being semi-nomadic, as distinct entities to the emirates (Macdowell 1996, Ferman 1989). Some of the emirates had been given complete sovereignty, but bound not to rise up against the Sultan or alter their borders. “Thus, even at a time of recognition of Kurdish sovereignty, the spectre of a united Kurdistan guided any negotiations on the part of the Ottomans” (O’Shea 2004:80).

3.3 Buffer Zone

3.3.1 Spanish Colonial Chiapas

The quality of Chiapas and Kurdistan as “places apart” stems from their geo-political origins as buffer zones.¹² They were areas where deep political, cultural, and ideological rivalries have repeatedly found themselves clashing. It is this quality that has persisted in

¹¹This number is given by O’Shea (2004) and McDowall (1996). According to Bekir Sami Seçkin (2006) and Ferman (1989) there were twenty-five emirates who pledged allegiance to the Ottoman sultan.

¹²This is reflected in the words of one Spanish conquistador who described Chiapas, “the land between peace and war” (quoted in Lenkersdorf 2004:78).

both regions up to the present day. In Chiapas the different political actors of the conquest were linked to distinct and important networks of power in Spain, which was struggling to establish its loyalties in Chiapas. The inherent and constant tension, then, for Spain was maintaining their solidarities to the homeland and in controlling their varied interests in the new land (see Aubry 2005, Lenkersdorf 2004).

While Cortés saw all of Chiapas as part of New Spain (Mexico), his general Alvarado envisioned Chiapas as part of the provinces of Guatemala that stretched to Central America. Marín was more Cortés' man. But Alvarado and Marín ultimately agreed on their support for slavery. Mazariegos did the bidding of the crown, which saw a large and powerful Mexico as a threat to its own power. In 1531, Mazariegos succeeded in preventing Chiapas from becoming part of the regional government of Mexico. Chiapas instead went with the provinces of the Audience of Guatemala (La Audiencia de la Capitanía General de Guatemala), which was ruled directly from Spain. Chiapas thus became the "delimiting province" (Provincia de los Confines), and served as a buffer zone between Spain (through Guatemala) and Mexico.

For Aubry (2005:70), the peripheralization of Chiapas began with Spain directly tying the administration of this newly and "arbitrarily" formed province to itself, making it the periphery of an empire by breaking its historical-structural Mesoamerican continuities through the destruction of its traditional Mayan ruling elite that could serve as an intermediary for Spanish power.¹³ The destruction of the traditional elite led to a

¹³ Wasserstrom (1989[1983]:23-24) notes that the conquista in Chiapas was different from the Oaxaca case, for example. Whereas the Spanish royal officials in the latter region preserved the power of the local Indian elite, the *caciques*, the Spanish military elite of the *encomiando* system in the Chiapan case "decided immediately not to tolerate the interference of the chiefs of the native Indian tribes or their clerical defenders." Stavenhagen (1975:170) argues that the distinguishing feature of Chiapas in comparison to Mexico was the Spanish application of its "Indian policy" which "laid the basis for the present class

local power vacuum in turn bringing about a continuous process of competition between the new elites of the colonial order. This tenuousness of any kind of dominant power structure in Chiapas ensured that the province would continue to exist as a zone of war for centuries to come between different powerful interests.

The rivalries began first between the conquistador military culture, structurally in place through the *encomienda* system, and the interests of the Catholic Spanish Crown in winning the allegiance of the native population through Christian conversion, as represented by the Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas, the famous sixteenth-century defender of the Chiapan Indian population.¹⁴ The continual existence of Chiapas as a zone of war contributed to the ongoing presence of a military culture. Several regions had yet to be subjugated. In particular, the bellicose Lacandón tribe of Indians continued to resist Spanish rule and engaged in hit-and-run raids against Spanish-friendly indigenous communities around Ocosingo (see also De Vos 1996[1980]), a place that was to be at the center of the future counter-hegemonic movement, the EZLN.

The Dominican mendicant missionaries, having first defended the Indians against colonial militarism, were themselves the product of the extremism of the Catholic Inquisition. The missionaries soon adopted similar militaristic practices as the *encomenderos* by the seventeenth century as they feared continuous nativist religious activity challenging Catholic dominance of community spiritual life. The mendicant friars, being closest to native villages and acting as the local bureaucracy for the Spanish crown, had the best opportunities to exploit ever-dwindling Indian tribute. Clerical greed in the economically impoverished highlands pitted them in increasing competition with

structure.” This policy consisted of segregating the Indian population into specific areas (*reducciones*), serving the interests of economic exploitation, as well as military, political, and religious control.

¹⁴Wasserstrom (1989[1983]) provides a good history on the ideological formation of Las Casas.

the corrupt and greedy colonial civil authorities based in Ciudad Real by the middle of the eighteenth century. By the end of the century, intense rivalries emerged over precious Indian labor resources between the civil authorities and allied landed interests of the economically more advanced lowlands and the colonial political and clerical authorities of the highlands. This rivalry turned into open warfare at the close of the seventeenth century, and later again in the nineteenth century.

3.3.2 Buffer Zone: Ottoman Kurdistan

Ottoman Kurdistan geopolitically emerged as the buffer for the imperial rivalry between the Ottoman and the Persian Safavid empire. The Sunni Ottomans saw the rising Shiism of the Safavids as a religious and cultural challenge to its legitimacy. Ottoman Kurdistan's peripheralization (as a place apart), similar to the Chiapas case, has its origins in the tenuousness of any dominant central power. The Ottoman Empire up until the sixteenth century was known for its effective central bureaucracy, but its need to consolidate power in the eastern border areas posed two significant and related challenges (see McDowall 1996).

The Safavids had the capacity to undermine Ottoman influence and invade at any opportune moment, and, accordingly, their struggle with the Ottomans did not come into a close until the end of the eighteenth century with the destruction of the former. The historical experiences of the Kurdish tribes dictated that direct rule and taxation would not work. The Kurdish advisor to Sultan Selim, Idris Bitlisi, as a former official of the ambitious Ak Koyunlu dynasty, saw how the heavy-handed tactics of Shah Ismail alienated the Kurdish tribes. Consequently, Bitlisi, in order to win Kurdish fealty, put

their rulers ousted by the Safavids back into power and gave them either full or partial sovereignty in return for oaths of loyalty to Ottoman interests, thus creating a quasi-feudal structure in the region. McDowall (1996:29) indicates how the Kurdish areas structurally came to constitute a place apart under Ottoman rule: “The governing principle underlying all these arrangements was that where Kurdish tribes maintained good order, provided troops when necessary, defended the border regions and above all acknowledged Ottoman suzerainty, they would be allowed a measure of freedom enjoyed virtually nowhere else in the empire.”

The Ottomans, after their initial success at Chaldiran in 1514, ably pitted the Kurdish emirates and tribes against both the Safavids and against each other in order to preempt the possibility of a consolidated rival emerging. During the back-and-forth struggles between the two empires of the next thirty years, the Kurdish tribes became quite capable of taking advantage of this situation of continuous warfare. For instance, when the Safavid Shah Tahmasp I attacked eastern Anatolia in 1534, many Kurdish emirs switched sides (see Özoğlu 2004). Thus Kurdish troops and tribes played important roles in the ongoing struggles for hegemony, and ultimately few emirates stayed with one empire for long. The mobility of some tribes also signified that they could avoid capture and punishment for their actions (O’Shea 2004). Those who did stay with the Ottomans flouted the rules of their agreements when given the chance. For instance, some did not provide the requisite men and equipment to the Ottomans for their campaigns in the west, failed to maintain upkeep of the fortresses, or failed to send taxes and tributary payments they collected on behalf of the Ottoman state (see Seçkin 2006).

The buffer zone status also imposed a highly militarized hierarchical culture in the Kurdish areas. Similar to Ciudad Real, the militarized tribal elements of the emirs used their coercive capacity to live parasitically off the settled peasants in their lands, as the history of the Baban principality, located largely in what is today Northern Iraq, reveals from around 1678 (when the principality officially took its name) to the beginning of the nineteenth century (see Ferman 1989). The Baban reflect the problem of political fragmentation; because of rivalries within and between ruling families, as well as Ottoman and Persian challenges, tribal governors could never be sure of the longevity of their rule over the peasantry and thus looked to extract as much wealth from them in as short of time as possible (Van Bruinessen 1992), a situation that was similar to the growing “anxiousness” of the Dominican superiors over their capacity to exploit Indian villages, which reached its peak after the indigenous revolt of 1712 (see Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:74) and formed the basis of the Church’s continued militancy.

Ultimately, both the colonial Chiapan and Ottoman Kurdish cases reflected intense disruptions in the civic lives and economic stabilities of their respective regions.

3.4 The Beginnings of Imperial (Colonial) Order

Both the Spanish crown and the Ottoman sultanate in trying to maintain their rule over the populations of Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan codified laws and institutions that were to provide the obligations and protections, and, in turn, regularity and predictability, for key social and political groups in the region. The crown and the sultanate as highly autonomous political entities vis-à-vis local elite interests, but with low state capacity in these only semi-incorporated regions, struggled to establish some negotiated agreement

of political rule with certain local actors. Weak state capacity, along with attempts to augment it, led to the breakdown of the laws and institutions that provided the protections for local interests through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, marking the growing unrest and instability that were to breakout in full-blown conflict by the nineteenth century.

3.4.1 Chiapas

The Spanish crown showed a remarkably high level of state autonomy in the middle of the sixteenth century when it challenged the predatory practices of the *encomenderos*. In 1545 the Audience of Guatemala had sent one of its judges, Juan Rogel, in order to review the lists of tributaries in Chiapas and the functioning of local officials. He recommended that Indian slave labor be abolished. Not satisfied, the influential Bishop Las Casas pressed Spain to send a second auditor. The Audience of Guatemala sent the official Gonzalo Hidalgo de Montemayor to Ciudad Real as a royal representative with the mandate to end slavery once and for all and review land policies. Hidalgo “surprised” and “horrified” the Spaniards of the provincial capital when he revoked the tributary rights of sixteen prominent *encomenderos* (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:27). The local civil authority in Ciudad Real, in turn, was left to the crown’s strongman, the *encomendero* Mazariegos, his cronies, and his descendents.

Officially, in order to begin organizing the indigenous communities, Hidalgo turned to the Dominican order and their missionaries, despite opposition from the Spanish elite of Ciudad Real. The Dominicans were to turn the Indian villages into “confessional republics” as a means of consolidating the Spanish crown’s rule over the

native population. Hidalgo did not trust the *encomenderos* due to recent uprisings by others of this caste in Peru and Nicaragua, and saw the missionaries as a quick way for the Spanish crown to consolidate power by turning the Indian population into good royal subjects.

Las Casas was an Idris Bitlisi type character. From experience as an *encomendero* in Cuba, he saw the horrible impact of forced tribute on the Indians. In 1514 he renounced his right to collect tribute and joined the Dominican order and vowed to struggle on behalf of the native populations, waging a moral crusade against the predatory nature of the *encomienda* system. Las Casas benefited from a wave of reform in the state's bureaucratic and religious orders pushing for granting the same political rights and responsibilities to the Indians as other Spanish subjects (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]).

Las Casas "inspired" the promulgation of "The New Laws" by Charles V in 1542 (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:30). These clearly served the interests of the crown interested in centralizing its power. According to the Laws, Spaniards could not live in Indian villages, nor reside in them for more than a few days. Further, while the *encomendero* could continue to collect tribute during the remainder of his life, upon his death royal authorities were to step in and convert the *encomienda* into direct tribute to the crown.

The debate quickly emerged as to who was to carry out these administrative reforms on the ground (see Wasserstrom 1989[1983]). Las Casas despised the colonial civil bureaucracy and deeply distrusted royal functionaries who he perceived as corrupt and self-serving in terms of exploiting Indian labor and speculating over their lands. Las Casas concerns conveniently coincided with other factors and changes in the Spanish

political system. First, many religious figures had obtained strong reputations as imperial administrators; second, the Pope had conferred on Charles V the power to appoint and remove Spanish priests and prelates. Las Casas astutely argued that the clergy could serve as spiritual administrators to the crown and in essence pushed for the formation of a theocracy in the exercise of power over the Indians.

When Las Casas arrived in Ciudad Real as the new Bishop in 1543, he quickly became embroiled in a struggle against the *encomenderos* who maintained “the state of war” situation in Chiapas by continuing to follow the provisions of the 1528 declaration that Indians who refused to provide assistance to the Spanish were to be imprisoned and converted into slaves (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]). Further, this group was seeking to destroy the established social structure of the indigenous communities.¹⁵ Las Casas quickly won the support of many of the Indians and their *caciques* by promising to protect them from the interference of the Spanish colonists, as in Oaxaca and Guatemala.

Las Casas facilitated Catholic conversion among the Indians by accepting their confessions of faith in the most general terms (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]). The Indians saw conversion as the most efficient means of obtaining the rights and protections that came with being a subject of the Spanish crown, and, thus, delimit the power of the *encomenderos*.

The crown’s maneuverings led to the institutionalization of certain colonial structures. These were laws that regulated the use of indigenous labor by establishing local courts in which grievances could be made and legal redress could be sought.

¹⁵ According to Wasserstrom (1989 [1983]:32), local officials wanted to do this by two means: first, they disrupted local patterns by which social networks formed, and forced local *caciques* and princes to marry women of inferior castes in order to discredit their rights to social prestige and influence. Second, the *encomenderos* appointed and replaced *caciques* to suit their interests. The colonists were largely successful in destroying the influence of the local Indian aristocracy by the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Indirect rule was set up through the codification of local government positions, bolstered by the support of the paternalistic mendicant friars who oversaw these developments under the auspices of the Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas. The Spanish colonists and later the Creoles (native-born descendants of the original colonists) constantly tried to subvert and renegotiate the laws to suit their interests as local conditions changed over time.

3.4.2 *The Beginnings of Imperial Order: Ottoman Kurdistan*

As noted above, the integration of Kurdistan, similar to the Chiapas situation, as a frontier region, as distinct from other parts of the empire, required new strategies of rule for the Ottoman structure.¹⁶ Kurdish beys were designated according to three political categories (see Van Bruinessen 1992, Ferman 1989). Among these were the large principalities or “Kurdish states” (*Kürt Hükümetler*) that had autonomy in their internal affairs, as they were located in the most inaccessible areas. The *hükümet*s did not have to pay taxes nor provide troops on a regular basis for Ottoman campaigns. The second

¹⁶ The Ottoman administrative structure (see Özoğlu 2004) as a function of its rapid expansion through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries became flexible in incorporating new regions. Here is the structural order as it applied to the central and most of the European parts of the empire: Central power, or the sultan, in the province was represented by the appointment of a *sancakbeyi*, a military authority, who was the administrator of executive authority in the *sancak* or district. The *kadi*, or religious judge, appointed from among the religious community (*ulema*) was the sultan’s legal authority. The *mufti* was the interpreter of laws, and belonged to the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, the legal foundation of the Ottoman state. Several *sancaks* constituted an *eyalet* or *beylerbeyilik* (province). The governor of the province was the *beylerbeyi* (with the title of *pasha*) or *vali*. The sancakbey was directly answerable to the sultan, except during military expeditions when they were responsible to the beylerbeyi

The Ottoman land structure consisted of three types: freehold (*mülk*), land for pious or charitable foundations (*vakıf*) under the sultan’s discretion, and agricultural land that belonged to the Ottoman state or *miri*. This last served exclusively to raise revenue for the state and was divided into three forms: *timar*, *zeamat*, and *has*. Military men held timars, which were village-level landholdings under the control of the lowest-level military official (*sipahi*). Zeamats were for higher-ranking officers (*subaşı*). Sancakbeyis and beylerbeyis held the *has*. Peasants (*reaya*), depending in which of these land types he was cultivating paid his taxes directly to the official in charge. Fiscal surveys were carried in order to assess the amount of tax to be paid by the peasants.

The timar and zeamat holders, in return for the land, had to hold a certain number of cavalymen (*cebelis*), based on their income as determined in fiscal surveys. These had to respond to the sancakbeyi’s call for a military expedition, and all military units of the province were under the command of the beylerbeyi.

administrative type was the *Yurtluk-Ocaklik* whose autonomy was more restricted, in that they had to pay taxes and contribute military forces for Ottoman campaigns. The emir in this case, though, still had the right to impose law in his district, and to pass on his power to his offspring. The third was the *sancak* or district whose leadership was appointed by the Ottomans.

The ultimate goal was to fully integrate the Kurdish tribes, but since they existed in multiple structural forms ranging from large confederacies to smaller fragmented tribes that were thinly spread out over large tracts of land, no one political strategy would suffice. The Ottomans sought to restructure the Kurdish political entities into more homogenous and thus more governable forms, which led to the introduction of what has been called the “unite and rule” policy (Özoğlu 2004:53).

To counterbalance the Shiite ideological influence of the Safavids, the Ottoman state turned to the Kurdish nobility whose legitimacy depended on claimed descendency from the Arabs. Following the counsel of Idris Bitilisi, and in contrast to Safavid and Ak Koyunlu rule, the Ottomans sought to strengthen the traditional Kurdish ruling elite, institutionalized via an imperial decree (*ferman*) from Sultan Suleyman, dated to around 1533.¹⁷ Thus the Ottomans, similar to the Spanish with Indian villages, codified laws that protected the autonomy of recognized Kurdish areas. The Ottoman state granted significant political exceptions to the Kurdish ruling families, including hereditary succession and military protections as long they recognized the Ottoman sultan as caliph (see also Ferman 1989).

¹⁷ Özoğlu (2004:53-54) dates the year of the decree to 1533. Other sources (Ferman 1989, Hakan 2002) do not provide a year.

The purpose of Ottoman policy was to eliminate political rivalries in the region and, by institutionalizing the positions of the Kurdish emirs, make them more dependent on the imperial state. If a Kurdish prince did not have anyone to inherit the mantle, then the decree called on the other Kurdish emirs to nominate the successor. Greater dependency promised the Ottomans more opportunities to interfere in the power structures of the region and increasingly influence Kurdish tribal politics, which the sultanate increasingly did from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. The empire dealt with the more powerful Kurdish emirs, not under Ottoman sway, more carefully and diplomatically. The last of these powerful emirates, Botan, was fully integrated into the empire by the nineteenth century.

The Ottoman state, similar to the Spanish crown with its relations with Chiapas, took a deliberate and distinct strategy to its Kurdish regions in comparison to other parts of its empire. Through the imperial decree of circa 1533, the sultan officially recognized the autonomy and positions of the various Kurdish emirs in order to win their loyalty. The codified protections and privileges that both the Spanish crown and the Ottoman sultanate provided, however, were not to last; they were increasingly violated starting in the late sixteenth century and continuing through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ultimately laying the groundwork for the large-scale conflicts that were to emerge in the nineteenth century.

In concluding this section, those who violated the protections of the Indian villages in Chiapas were the Church, the royal authorities, and the Spanish colonists interested in both military domination and the siphoning off of resources from the indigenous communities. The situation for the Indians worsened as the Spanish crown

tried to reassert its authority over Chiapas by the second half of the eighteenth century. The Church and the Spanish colonists challenged both the power of the Spanish crown and each other in their competition for limited wealth and Indian labor resources. Both the Church and local Creoles successfully fought to win Chiapas' independence from Spain in the early part of the nineteenth century, but by the middle of the century turned on each other. By the late part of the century, highland elites engaged in widespread violence against the Indian communities.

In the Kurdish case, the Ottomans increasingly violated the terms of the imperial decree in their efforts to augment their state capacity and bring the eastern reaches of their empire under centralized control, ultimately destroying the emirs militarily by the nineteenth century. But the Ottomans left a political vacuum of coercion in their wake, reflected in the chaotic struggles between Kurdish tribes, the empire, and foreign powers in the late nineteenth century.

3.5 Breaking the Contract: Violating the Imperial (Colonial) Order from the 17th to the early 19th Centuries

The imperial centers in both Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan won allegiances through the initiatives of their agents—Las Casas and Idris Bitlisi—and the rights and protections they helped to codify for indigenous leaders. But by the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these protections were being violated by imperial officials, contributing to an environment of violence, tension, and uncertainty in the regions. There were two reasons why imperial order broke down. First, due to a lack of state capacity, the fear and insecurity of losing control of the populations under imperial sway and influence, led imperial officials to try to impose greater direct control and, in the process, progressively

alienate indigenous leaders. Secondly, and simultaneously, corrupt imperial and local officials in both these border regions with poor economic infrastructures, engaged in economic predation.

3.5.1 Chiapas

Around 1570, a Dominican Fray Pedro made his way into the Lacandón jungle in order to evangelize the Indians there by himself and bring the news of the “peace of God and the King.” More than a century later, in 1695, Fray Pedro de la Concepción went into the Lacandón to again bring the word of god to the Indians, bolstered by other missionaries behind and hundreds upon hundreds of soldiers ready to force the word of god upon the Lacandons who had been raiding the Christian communities of Ocosingo in search of slaves and victims to sacrifice. De Vos (1996[1980]:16) states that the militarized approach by the Church became “normal” and “necessary” at the end of the seventeenth century. But the approach by the Catholic Church toward the Lacandons—a tribe that came to be destroyed—symbolized a major shift in its stance towards the Indians of Chiapas. Instead of serving as their protectors as the Church did in the sixteenth century under Las Casas, it took on a more militaristic and predatory attitude, a product of a redefined colonial order. What changed?

First, in 1546 Las Casas went back to Spain to serve in the royal court, as did many Spaniards. The Lacandón jungle was impenetrable, there were no mines, and the lack of communication links and access to ports prevented significant administrative and economic integration into the region (Aubry 2005). Consequently, many Spaniards repatriated back to Spain, went to New Spain to pursue wealth in the mines, or went to

Guatemala for political appointments.¹⁸ Spanish administrative practices thus fell into neglect; yearly tribute payments and censuses were overlooked. Because of the geography of Chiapas as a bridge between New Spain and the Audience of Guatemala, Spanish authorities began engaging in the pirating of contraband and precious goods. The breakdown in administrative practices and with the ensuing lawlessness also led to greater abuses against the Indians by Spanish civil and religious authorities.¹⁹

With the weakening of the administrative capacity of Ciudad Real, the leaders of the Indian villages found some space to begin managing the two main institutions of the colonial period. These were the town treasuries (*cajas de comunidad*) and the religious sodalities (*cofradías*). The Dominicans had established the latter as way to collect village revenue. But, as administrative control weakened in the sixteenth century, “local curates did not keep a close watch over the *cofradías*, and that the ceremonial rounds associated with the sodalities became important expressions of community identity” (Gosner 1996b:31). These institutions allowed indigenous leaders to consolidate their positions in village politics. They represented and defended their communities in the face of the tax collectors, merchants, and church officials (Gosner 1996b).²⁰

¹⁸ Gosner (1996:30) talks of a prolonged period of economic depression in Chiapas and writes, “For Chiapas, the most telling indicator of the seriousness of the economic downturn is the sharp drop in the Spanish population of Ciudad Real from 280 *vecinos* in 1620 to only 50 by 1659.”

¹⁹Wasserstrom (1989[1983]) notes the contradictions inherent in the Church’s approach in Chiapas. In order to successfully proselytize, the priests would have to be both patient and tolerant. But they saw the Indians as too alien and uncivilized, and not prepared to properly receive the word of god. Thus, while they pursued the growth of the Christian community, they sought to provide only marginal participation to the Indian in religious life. In turn, many Indian leaders began to feel alienated.

²⁰An example of this was Juan Atonal (see Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:39), the mayor (*alcalde*) of Chiapa. He organized rituals around his town’s *cofradías*, and took the opportunity in 1584, borrowing the language of Las Casas, to assert his community’s right to properly practice their new-found religion as loyal subjects of the Spanish crown, free from the coercion of “tyrannical” Church officials. Interestingly, Atonal called the attention of indigenous leaders of formerly rival communities such as those from Zinacantán. For Wasserstrom, Atonal represents the high degree that the ideas of Las Casas were accepted by the Indians, as well as their struggle to establish their communal autonomy, which ultimately failed.

Spanish paternalism had begun to breakdown by the late sixteenth century, and the village indigenous elites “would face reprisals from their own people as well as from colonial officials” (Gosner 1996b:31) in the growing conflict between the various governing officials and the Spanish colonists. In 1634 royal officials of the Audience had reached an agreement with the leaders of the local colonists. The regional governors (*alcaldes mayores*), appointed by the Audience, could appoint their lieutenants or local mayors (*alcaldes*) from among the colonists. The governors preferred not to share what little wealth existed in Chiapas with their historical enemies, the *encomenderos* (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]). By 1636, one of the royal officials openly challenged the loyalty of the local Spanish elite for refusing their subordinate position. These tensions turned into open warfare by the 1690s.

The political fragmentation in Chiapas had much to do with the political crises afflicting the Spanish imperial center, 1670-1730. Under Charles II the state suffered bankruptcy due to decades of warfare with the French, Dutch, and English. Severe political instability brought the arrival of a new Bourbon King with new ideas about government. “For its American colonies, this turmoil spelled more aggressive taxation, bitter quarrels among rival governing authorities, and great uncertainty altogether” (Gosner 1996b:31).

What Gosner is pointing to is that after 1680, a weakened Spanish state, in the midst of a major economic crisis, sought to regain control of its colonies, that in effect by then had obtained “de facto autonomy” (Viqueira 2004:116). The objective of greater

Atonal only contributed to the fear and distrust of the Spanish clergy felt for the Indians in Chiapas, which combined with the struggle to prevent decreases in the levels of Indian tribute as their populations began to diminish due to disease and plague. As they began to die off after 1565, the Church began soliciting the crown for more lands. By 1590 the mendicant friars had acquired considerable landholdings for cattle ranching, sugar plantations, and farms.

control, however, faced significant challenges due to uncertainties of the crown's future: it was weak in the face of resistance within Spain and without from various European powers. Such challenges led to a civil war and the Spanish War of Succession starting in 1702.

The conflict on the peninsula, embroiling both civil and religious leaders, soon spilled over to the colonies. According to Viqueira (2004), unclearly defined positions of administrative power, their overlapping jurisdictions, and ineffective legislation, all worked to inflame the conflict. At the same time, however, weak local government provided an opening for the crown to take advantage of the colonial divisions and to try to reimpose its control. Yet, the very weakness of the central state, adds Viqueira, threatened a wider war, involving the whole of the populace.

The Spanish Crown sent Marcos Bravo de la Serna in 1674 as the new bishop of Chiapas and Soconusco. His zeal in serving the Spanish state and in modernizing government, along with his distrust of everyone, soon led him to make enemies with the alcalde mayor of Chiapas and with several members of the Audiencia de Guatemala, who accused him of illegally trying to enrich himself. La Serna also launched a campaign against idolatry which, not only reflected the Spanish fear of heterodox practices among the Indian villages and the failure of full Catholic evangelization, but also the crown's own attack on the power of the Dominican order that had come to control 80% of the parishes in Chiapas (Viqueira 2004). La Serna's sudden death in 1680 brought only limited success to his objectives.

The bishop to follow, Francisco Núñez de la Vega of the Dominican order, a Spaniard (Creole) born in the colonies, reversed La Serna's policies, although he

continued the attack on idolatry and the spiritual cult leaders (*maestros nagualistas*) among the Indians. Similar to La Serna, Núñez de la Vega continued to unify the Church, but broke from his predecessor's mission of having it serve the crown. The Church was to be independent, and Núñez de la Vega concentrated his power in the ability to excommunicate colonial governors and officials of the Audience. But the bishop soon found himself in violent conflict with the powerful Audience member (*oidor*) Joseph de Escals in 1689-90.

Economic growth in the provinces of Guatemala in the form of indigo production and Honduran silver mines started to pit regional interests and elites against one another. Violent struggles for Indian labor and tax revenue emerged, which turned into a full-blown war in 1702. There were criminal accusations made by the political figure de Escals in 1696-97 against the Audiencia president Jacinto de Barrios and his allies, the governors (*alcaldes mayores*) of Salvador, Sonsonate, and Nicaragua. Escals' own allies were among the merchant and mining classes from Honduras. Both sides formed armies and it soon turned into a regional war. Núñez de la Vega ended up excommunicating the military troops of the Audiencia in 1701 for marching on one of his allies.

The struggle for control over revenues in Chiapas depended on its distinct tributary structure. The provincial governors in the rest of the provinces of Guatemala and in New Spain collected tribute, while in Chiapas a lieutenant of the royal officials, who were closely tied to local interests, was responsible for managing the royal treasury and the tribute paid by the Indians (Viqueira 2004). This structure in Chiapas, then, pitted the *alcalde mayor* against the royal officials. In 1689, the *alcalde mayor* Manuel de

Maisterra went before a royal audience and won a decree from Spain allowing him to take control of the treasury away from his rivals, the local merchants.

With his new authority, Maisterra expanded the system of “coercive commerce” (*repartimiento de mercancías*) in which the Indian communities were forced to buy certain commodities and receive unfairly low payments for the production of their goods that were in high demand in the region. Gosner (1996b:33) argues that the “repartimientos were the most significant single factor that provoked the rebellion [of 1712] in colonial Chiapas.”

In 1693 the Indian population congregated in Tuxtla to demand the local Indian governor’s dispossession, fanned in part by the ambitions of rival Indian notables. The alcalde violently moved to put down the leaders of the uprising. In response, the mob killed Maisterra and the Indian governor. The event helped to fan Spanish fears of a larger Indian rebellion, which did not come, at least not at that time. Greater instability and a power struggle between the Spanish authorities came in 1700-01 when the crown tried to reassert its authority in Guatemala. This was in the form of Francisco Gómez de Lamadriz, sent from Spain by the Council on the Indies (*Consejo de Indias*). His purpose was to investigate the workings of the Guatemala government, which was racked by accusations and counter-accusations of corruption by its members. But soon Lamadriz engaged in his own abuses of power (Viqueira 2004). He came into conflict with many among the local elite, including the president and members of the Audience, provoking near riots in the capital. He ended up having to flee from the kingdom of Guatemala in order to give Spain a chance to resolve the problem.

On his way to New Spain, Lamadriz stopped in Ciudad Real and met with the bishop Núñez de la Vega and won his tacit support. A few days later Lamadriz settled in the town of Guadalcázar in the district of Tehuantepec, where he was able to intercept the correspondences between Spain and Guatemala. Having discovered Lamadriz's actions, the government of New Spain ordered him to an out-of-the-way corner of the empire. But he soon settled back into Guatemalan territory in Soconusco, under the protection of the governor and local landholders.

Guatemala, discovering that Lamadriz had defied his agreement to leave, dispatched an army to capture him. In order to resist Guatemala, Lamadriz was able to convince the different communities of Soconusco to pick up arms in his defense, arguing that he was the legitimate representative of the Spanish king and that the Audience "was nothing more than a collector of tributes" (quoted in Viqueira 2004:119). The alcalde mayor of Ciudad Real contributed troops to aid Guatemala, while the bishop Núñez de la Vega threatened to excommunicate all those who joined the alcalde's call. The soldiers from Ciudad Real were quickly defeated by several of the Indian communities that supported Lamadriz. Nevertheless, some communities failed to join the resistance because the local priests forbade it, and the growing military threat quickly dissuaded continued support for Lamadriz. This event clearly reflects the high level of political fractiousness that existed throughout the Audience of Guatemala and the readiness of the opportunistic local elites to challenge the control of the crown (Viqueira 2004).

While Gosner (1996b) pays greatest attention to the repartimientos²¹ as the most significant factor for the indigenous rebellion of 1712 in the central highlands, Viqueira

²¹ Gosner argues that the repartimientos had an impact in the form of three variables which would lead directly to violence. The first was the degree that commodities in demand by the Spanish disrupted or

(2004) sees a complex interaction between the continuing conflicts²² among the Spaniards, harsh tributes, economic downturns, demographics, new social networks forming with the changes in infrastructure, and the emergence of new charismatic leaders among the Indians. The conflicts among the Spanish weakened their political and social control over the region, allowing space for a new and religiously inspired charismatic leadership among the Tzeltal Indians to mobilize the communities around Cancuc—which were now socially linked as a function of trade, markets, and larger populations—against colonial domination. Yet, the rebellion failed to grow sufficiently to overthrow the colonial structure.²³ In the end, the uprising brought more cultural and economic oppression upon the Indian communities.

Aubry (2005) sees the repression of the rebellion of 1712 and its precursor in 1701 with Lamadriz in Barrington Moore's terms: the failure of early peasant resistance against a growing state hegemony as the beginning of capitalist modernization. Indeed,

threatened subsistence agriculture. A greater threat indicated the greater the likelihood of rebellion. The second was the degree that the repartimientos altered indigenous modes of production. A greater disruption of the indigenous mode of production meant a greater chance of rebellion. The third was the degree that local notables (*caciques*) were politically and economically integrated into the larger colonial system. The less these local elites were integrated signified a greater potential that they would lead a resistance movement.

²² 1706 saw the emergence of a significant rivalry between the *alcalde mayor* Martín Gonzalez de Vergara against the Basque merchant Pedro de Zavaleta who became wealthy selling indulgences to the Indians as well as consumer goods with the protection of the Church. The *alcalde mayor* saw the merchant as a threat to his control of the economy of Ciudad Real. The conflict by 1707 involved the wealthy landowners outside Ciudad Real (see Viqueira 2004), further weakening any kind of central Spanish control over Chiapas.

²³ The rebellion consisted of Indians from a collection of twenty-five Tzeltal, Tzotzil, and Chol villages who had gathered in Cancuc to venerate the Virgin. Led by the Tzotzil prophet Sebastián Gómez, they formed military units led by captains who had been serving as assistants to the Dominican parish priests who they had come to despise (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]). They attacked Chilón, killing all the adult Spanish/Creoles of the town. They then marched on Ocosingo, destroying the Dominican haciendas and sugar plantations. The movement's vision was to bring about a new Spanish and Christian order with the Indians ruling and the Spanish/Creole colonists serving. The goals and language of the uprising, despite claiming that the Spanish King was dead, nevertheless, did reflect the high degree the indigenous communities accepted the legitimacy that Las Casas had brought to the Catholic hierarchy and the Spanish crown as protectors, which the local Spanish/Creole elite had corrupted. It was in part, this acceptance of Christian and Spanish legitimacy which prevented the spread of the movement. But there were other important factors: fear of Spanish reprisal, and still others, tired of Dominican exploitation, feared more of the same in Gómez's incorporation of that same hierarchy into his own movement.

according to the historian García de León (1994 [1985]), the repression of the Cancuc uprising allowed the Spanish colonial structure in Chiapas to impose its economic domination there and in other highland valleys such as Tumbalá and Zinacantán. The military response allowed for the killing off or dispersal of the Indian population in these areas as well as in Soconusco (the area of the Lamadriz resistance), and for the Spanish/Creole elite to take over much of the land for new haciendas and an expansion of the cattle industry.

The destruction of the rebellion, however, did not signify that Spanish hegemony was clearly imposed upon the Indian communities. Instead, we find a kind of political vacuum that opened the space for new struggles over who would dominate and regulate the lives of the indigenous population. Indigenous civil authorities in the seventeenth century came to have an official function and identity. The provincial governor (*alcalde mayor*) of Chiapas appointed them and the president of the Audience of Guatemala ratified the appointment. The indigenous civil authorities were men of status and wealth in their communities, and once appointed by the provincial governor their power rested in the authority given to them by the Spanish authorities (Viqueira 2004). Several of the indigenous governors came to be hated by their communities for abuse. They were, however, mainly faithful servants of the Spanish, and served as an effective means of control over the native population. But as political rivalries and instabilities began to afflict the Spanish authorities by the late seventeenth century, many of the posts of Indian governors were left vacant. By the start of the eighteenth century, there were no appointed governors for all the communities among the Zeltales, Coronas, Chinampas, and for the protectorate of Huitiupán (Viqueira 2004).

The *alcaldes mayores* took advantage of the aftermath of the uprising to try to consolidate their positions as representatives of the crown and regulators of Indian tribute, at the expense of the local Creoles (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]). Gabriel de Laguna, who became *alcalde mayor* in 1732, rejected the certification of the election of municipal advisors, effectively suspending local interference in the practices of royal officials. These royal officials directly appropriated greater amounts of Indian tribute through the *repartimientos*, sending greater amounts to the crown, as well as pocketing greater amounts for themselves.

The *alcaldes mayores*, as they continued to successfully block any organized opposition, appointed lieutenants from among local allies. This practice, then, succeeded in creating new “hostile” and “incompatible” divisions from among the landholders and merchants in the region (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:63). On the one hand, independent merchants ceased practicing as such and took part in the sharing of royal booty. On the other hand, the majority of the merchants and landholders became forced to take lesser roles as suppliers and middlemen. These developments support Pamuk’s (2004) argument that most non-Western forms of state development reflect methods in which the central state and its bureaucracy perceive the rapid accumulation of capital by merchants or other interests as threats to its ability to rule. The central state in such cases, therefore, maintains high levels of autonomy over local interests.²⁴ Resource extraction had to be in

²⁴ One unsympathetic observer (quoted in Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:64) circa 1760 describes the *repartimiento* system: “The abuse, deprivation, and awkwardness of the Indian has to do with (in its majority) to the excesses of the *repartimiento* system and trade that the *alcaldes mayores* control in the province. . .it consists in buying and selling cacao, cotton, maize, cochineal, dyes, indigo, cattle, horses, mules, bulls, cows, wax, iron, steel, cloths, hats, wool, and rugs. . .In some villages, the governors distribute more products than the Indians can pay for, and then they are forced to buy them at unfavorable prices in order to fulfill their obligations. With this system, even if the governor pays only 10 pesos for a quantity of cacao, the Indians, if they do not cultivate enough to compensate him for his goods, have to buy them at 18, 20 pesos, or more.”

the hands of the political bureaucracy, and by the eighteenth century the colonial authorities had consolidated their position enlisting the support of only their closest allies from among the local Creole population.

The provincial governors greatly expanded the highly exploitative *repartimientos* by the late eighteenth through the help of their local allies. It consisted of forcing Indian communities to sell their products at very low prices and then selling those goods back to the same communities at inflated prices to be paid either in kind or in money. Although conditions became more oppressive for the Indian population, the royal authorities in Guatemala did not put a stop to it because of the greater amounts of money the system was bringing in for public coffers. The *repartimiento* of cacao and cotton had become so lucrative by 1760, the administrative division of central Chiapas into two governorships was proposed. This doubled the “extortion” the Indians had to face (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:64). The new governor of Tuxtla, Juan de Oliver, in 1768 wasted no time in taking control of the cacao trade in 1768, and appointed men who in turn began to publicly beat the Indians and force them to sell their products in order to increase the production of cacao, even traveling from village to village exhorting the natives to relinquish small-scale planting of corn and beans.

The impact of the *repartimientos* combined with a plague that destroyed crops marked a serious downturn in the Indian village economies. Many indigenous communities began abandoning their villages to stake out new territory in the Lacandón jungle. The decline of resources marked a significant increase in the levels of competition between the lowland Juan de Oliver and his allies with the highland interests of the Church. In the face of renewed attempts by the Church in 1770 to increase their coffers

through local visits by the Bishop, Oliver officially complained to the Audience, claiming that the economic ruin afflicting the villages was due to “episcopal extravagance,” not to the plague or to the “investments” of the *repartimientos*. According to Wasserstrom (1989[1983]:69), this event “set the stage for greater confrontation between civil and religious authorities in the province,” which was to emerge in the following century, with the former largely representing the lowlands and the latter the highlands.

Oliver’s moves coincided with the Council of Spain’s attempts since 1753 to secularize the clergy throughout the colonies. The Church in Spain and royal officials felt the mendicant friars had too much influence and control over the indigenous communities and sought to displace them. In 1774, a newly appointed and activist governor (*alcalde mayor*) to Ciudad Real, Cristóbal Ortiz de Avilés, seized the opportunity and sought to usurp the institutions of the local Church, which, in turn, “precipitated a sharp crisis in the relations among all the types of authority...” (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:79).

Central Chiapas was in a state of chaos in 1770-71 just as the crop plague was coming to an end. Governor Ortiz followed this with a system of *repartimientos* even more rapacious than before. The competition that ensued between the Church and the civil authorities over Indian tribute pushed their villages into economic ruin. Many began to flee the highlands to look for wage labor on the plantations in the lowlands. While the Indians of central Chiapas largely held onto to their small parcels of land for subsistence agriculture, the tributary and *repartimiento* systems dramatically changed village life. Provincial governors used their power to mobilize Indian labor towards the production of lucrative crops such as cocoa, cochineal, sugar, and cotton textiles. By 1819, thirty years after the abolishment of the *repartimiento* system, the Indians were still subject to

considerably higher levels of tribute than those of New Spain, continuing the peripheralization of Chiapas as a place apart. (The Indian villages further up in the highlands and the Lacandón were still outside the purview of Spanish/Creole control.) In the meantime, both the civil authorities and the Church began denouncing one another to the Audience of Guatemala.

By 1779, the Spanish crown again showed a high level of autonomy by outlawing the *repartimiento* system. But low Spanish state capacity ensured that the provincial governors would continue with their coercive system of commerce, along with a burgeoning contraband economy. Both forms of trade then opened new possibilities for merchants and large landowners, including the Church. Between 1780 and 1820 new plantations and cattle ranches opened, and existing ones became more profitable as prices significantly went up for animals and livestock. The secular clergy, now taking control of the Church from the hands of the monastic orders, became the managers of much wealth, seeking investment in new projects with the Indian labor they controlled (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]).

The Spanish crown, in order to regain control of colonial tributes, appointed a new group of royal intendants in 1790. This move brought the local authorities in direct conflict with the Spanish state over who was to dominate the limited amounts of wealth and Indian labor. The rivalry turned into warfare in the nineteenth century.

3.5.2 Breaking the Contract: Violating the Imperial Order from the 17th to the early 19th Centuries in Ottoman Kurdistan

The Ottoman sultanate, unlike the Spanish crown which inflicted a sudden blow to the *conquistador* headmen by taking away their *encomiendas* in Chiapas by the middle of

the sixteenth century, began wresting administrative control away from the Kurdish beys in less dramatic fashion starting in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

By 1518 the Ottoman administration of Kurdistan began with the first tax registry (*defter*) of Diyarbakir, the core of twelve²⁵ *sancaks* under central control.²⁶ Suleyman's reign saw the formation of new *eyalets* or provinces, and many *sancaks* from Diyarbakir were incorporated into the new provinces.²⁷ The Ottomans directly ruled ten *sancaks* of Diyarbakir in which the sultan appointed the beys and the district consisted of the *timars* and *zeamets* typical of Ottoman structure found elsewhere.²⁸ There were eight *yurtluk-ocaklik* types²⁹ and five *hükümet*s.³⁰ The province or *eyalet* of Van, incorporated in 1548 after its conquest, consisted of thirty-seven *sancaks* under the *hükümet* structure.

One of the first examples of increasing Ottoman state capacity over the Kurdish beys came with the appropriation of the *cizye*, a tax levied on the Christian communities, in 1554. According to archives dated to that year (see Seçkin 2006:103), more than 370,000 *akçe* (Ottoman currency) began to flow from the Bitlis *cizye* to the state. In 1568, based on an order sent to the Van Beylerbeyi (see Seçkin 2006:103), the Ottomans took away another traditional source of revenue for Kurdish leaders. Before Ottoman hegemony, the beys collected a tributary tax or a tariff (*baç* and *gümrük*) from traders and merchants that ventured into their territories. Although the Kurdish beys protested, the practice continued. The seventeenth century Ottoman travel writer Evliye Çelebi notes

²⁵ Other sources indicate that there were 13 *sancaks* including Nuseybin (see Seçkin 2006).

²⁶ These first *sancaks* were Amid, the main *sancak* of Diyarbakir, Mardin, Arapkir, Kiğı, Harput, Ergani, Siverek, Sincar, Ruha (Urfa), Bire, Çemişkezek, and Çermik (Özoğlu 2004).

²⁷ The new provinces were Dulkadir (1522), Erzurum (1533), Mosul (1535), Baghdad (1535), Van (1548), and Şehrizer (year unknown as to when it became a province) (Özoğlu 2004).

²⁸ The directly ruled *sancaks* were Harput, Ergani, Siverek, Nusaybin, Hasankeyf, Çemişkezek, Siirt, Mayyafariqin (Silvan), Akçakale, Habur, and Sincar (Özoğlu 2004).

²⁹ Of the *yurtluk-ocaklik*, these were Sağman, Kulp, Mihraniye, Tercil, Atak, Pertek, Çarpakçur, Çermik (Özoğlu 2004).

³⁰ The *hükümet*s were Cizre, Eğil, Genç, Palu, and Hazo (Özoğlu 2004).

that the ruler of Bitlis had to collect the tax on behalf of the state from the merchants passing through his lands.

Further financial demands came in the 1570s as imperial decrees called on the Kurdish chiefs to invest and share the costs with the sultanate in the maintenance and upkeep of the territorial fortresses, along with financing the continuous training and weapons of their troops (Seçkin 2006:98-99). They also had to send supplies to Istanbul in order to maintain the Ottoman army equipped.

There is also archival evidence that by 1578 (Seçkin 2006:107), the Ottoman state, reflecting its high level of state autonomy, had created the impression that it was the ultimate arbiter of social order in the Kurdish *sancaks*. The state removed Halil Bey, ruler of one of the *sancaks* of Siirt, from power for refusing to pass tributary taxes over to the empire.³¹ The empire replaced him with Ali Bey, according to a decree emitted on June 25, 1578. Once in as the *sancak* bey, the peasants of Siirt sent petitions to the state complaining of Ali Bey's oppressive practices. The *sancak bey* had apparently been raiding the peasant storehouses of barley and wool, making threats, extorting goods from merchants, holding whole Christian neighborhoods hostage, and, worst of all, threatening to kill Ottoman officials who arrived to collect taxes of money and grains. Due to the complaints, the state took Ali Bey to court and, in addition to executing him, found that the petitioners were entitled to restitution of their goods and money.

1584 marked greater incorporation of the *eyalet* of Diyarbakir into the state apparatus. Following Sultan Suleyman's death, the empire appointed a three-crested general to rule the province as vizier in place of the previous two-crested general who

³¹ According to Seçkin (2006), Halil Bey had been diligent about participating in Ottoman campaigns and providing men and equipment in the service of the empire. Yet, he had been found guilty of withholding revenues from the empire. In turn, the empire replaced him.

ruled as a *beylerbeyi*. This new structure of rule reflected the military importance the province held for the Ottoman state, and lasted until the *Tanzimat* era of reform of the middle of the nineteenth century. The Sultan issued an imperial decree on October 15, 1584 demanding that the Kurdish emirs and holders of military fiefdoms tied to the *eyalet* of Diyarbakir send representatives at once to the newly appointed Vizier Osman Pasha's side to aid in the defense of the province and for other administrative matters. Otherwise, heavy punishments would be enacted against the Kurdish beys through the appropriation of their sources of revenue and the forced collection of two years of yields produced by their lands (Seçkin 2006:99).³²

The seventeenth century marks a time of increasing tension between the Kurdish beys and the Ottoman state as the latter asserted greater administrative control over the privileges of the former (Özoğlu 2004, Ferman 1989, Seçkin 2006, van Bruinessen 1992). In turn, the beys began to chafe. Özoğlu (2004:58) refers to a treatise (*Nasihatname*) written by Aziz Efendi in 1632-3 in which he gives a carefully worded warning to Sultan Murad IV that the Kurdish beys may turn to the Safavids if the growth of Ottoman hegemony continues unabated.

The Treaty of Zohab in 1639 gave the Ottomans a greater opportunity by which to further consolidate its hegemony. It did so by establishing the first mutually accepted quasi-border region with the Safavid Empire. This frontier swathe of territory depended on the existing tribal loyalties of the area, but because of the unstable quality of such loyalties, the border area spanned over 100 miles from the Zagros river in the east to the

³² Seçkin (2006:99) provides evidence from archives that nearly a decade before the decree of 1584, orders to punish the Zilan and Besyan Kurdish tribes for not providing enough troops and for the lack of preparedness of the troops provided in terms of weapons and horses. Again, their sources of revenue were to be appropriated for the Ottoman treasury. Seemingly, however, the 1584 decree reflects an institutionalization in the ways to deal with recalcitrant Kurdish beys.

Tigris in the west (O'Shea 2004:82). Imperial conflict, according to O'Shea (2004), manifested itself in the form of considerable inter-tribal rivalries and unhindered raiding. This dynamic, in turn, served to break Kurdistan down into smaller entities that were constantly plotting against one another. Now, with the treaty, the Ottomans could divert military forces in order to expand their control over the areas within Kurdistan.³³ The treaty, for instance, included a mutual agreement with the Safavids to destroy Kurdish citadels. The friction between the Ottomans and the Kurdish beys, therefore, began to manifest itself more sharply, particularly in the struggle for tariffs and tributary taxes. Ottoman troops began to take part or intervene in trade in the provincial areas, and the Kurdish beys found themselves competing with them for revenue, as the case of the bey of Bitlis, Abdal Han, in the 1650s shows.³⁴

The social order of Bitlis (see van Bruinessen 1992), as a reflection of Ottoman Kurdistan, had a strictly hierarchical feudal structure. The emir and his family were at the top. Below the emir were the tribal heads (*agas*) that served as advisors and other notables. Many of the *agas* held fiefs which provided the income to allow them to live in towns. Others lived on the in-kind goods produced from the herds of their nomadic tribesman. The tribesman constituted the military class, ranging from mobile cavalry to

³³An imperial decree indicates that the *eyalet* of Diyarbakir had grown to 33 *sancaks* by the year 1691 (see Seçkin 2006:98).

³⁴In the 1650s, the Ottoman Janissary corps, for example, who were sent to man the big fortresses in places like Van and Erzurum, complained about the bey from Bitlis, Abdal Han, directly to the Sultan. They accused him of forcefully expropriating their goods garnered as customs payments for provincial cross-border trade (see Seçkin 2006). According to van Bruinessen (1992), Abdal Han had engaged in cross-border raids flouting Ottoman power.

In any case, Abdal Han's provocative actions and the complaints from the Janissaries gave the Ottoman state an excuse to interfere in the affairs of the Bitlis *hükümet*. The empire had Abdal Han removed. The *beylerbeyi* of Van led a force and installed Abdal Han's son, Ziyaeddin, in power. According to sources (see Özoğlu 2004), Bitlis transformed from a *hükümet* into a *sancak*. Structurally, that meant that the tribes in the area were further incorporated into the Ottoman state apparatus. The emirate contained 13 *zemets* and 124 *timars* distributed among tribal leaders, along with important military positions such as cavalry commander (*alaybeyi*), troop commander (*çeribaşı*), and captain (*yuźbaşı*) (Özoğlu 2004).

footmen. Many non-warrior Kurds lived in town of unknown occupations. The Kurdish peasantry (*reaya*) lived in the mountains and hills. The Christian peasantry, mainly Armenian, living outside of the towns, formed the “economic engine” (van Bruinessen 1992:170) of Bitlis together with the animal herds of the Kurdish tribal nomads. The Armenians, although politically of low status, constituted the majority of the towns’ population and engaged in the crafts and trade economy.

The emir’s court served as a means of maintaining control over the tribes. The tribal chieftains had to send brothers or a son to live as a hostage in the emir’s court. Second, the emir could exploit the rivalries and blood feuds among the tribes. The tribes also depended on the emir as a legitimate authority to resolve the conflicts between them.

With consistent Ottoman challenges to their feudal autonomy, the Kurdish beys augmented their struggles among each other for local supremacy in the eighteenth century. This led to a marked increase in violence and a general breakdown of law and order in Ottoman Kurdistan, similar to what Chiapas experienced during the same century. Increased pressures among the ruling families in the form of rivalries, and Ottoman and Iranian intrigues for influence led to the over-exploitation (similar to the *repartimientos* in Chiapas) of the local peasant population by the Kurdish chieftains. One tribal *aga* told the British traveler Rich that their insecurity was the reason why their tribe did not settle as agriculturalists. As Rich points out, the tribe could forcefully extract what they needed without worry for laws (Van Bruinessen 1992:173). Van Bruinessen notes that while Ottoman rule brought some tax relief to the peasants of Kurdistan, the breakdown of law and order in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought greater hardships on the rural population. In certain cases the peasantry would migrate in mass to

areas where one lord ruled in order to decrease the extent of their exploitation, which was similar to the situation of eighteenth century peasants in the Chiapan highlands who began to migrate to the Lacandón Jungle or to the lowlands to seek paid labor in the plantations. In other cases, displaced Kurdish peasants would join gangs of bandits.

Contributing to the unstable environment, the Persians and the Ottomans periodically continued their all out military campaigns in the area. The Treaty of Kurdan of 1746 followed 16 years of full-scale conflict, which served to further solidify the 1639 border (O'Shea 2004). Yet the treaty remained unratified due to the death of Nadir Shah of Iran in 1747. The Treaty of Erzurum was signed in 1823. As a result, law and order remained weak, thus reflecting the weakness of the Ottoman state's presence in the region.

The chaos in the eighteenth century started early. In 1703, attacks by the Kurdish tribes of Şirvan, Kuhistan, and Zeriki on the inhabitants of Siirt raised Ottoman concerns (see Seçkin 2006:111-113). The attacks consisted of raiding trading caravans, strong-arming town merchants, and pillaging the peasants' crops. The people of Siirt beseeched the sultanate in Istanbul—an indication of the empire's high level of state autonomy—to put down the Yezidi brigands who were sponsored by the rebellious Muhammed Bey of Şirvi *Sancağ*. The sultanate did respond by emitting a decree to the Van and Diyarbakir *Beylerbeyis* requesting military action. The seriousness of the situation forced the emission of another decree urging the Van *Berleybeyi*, Ahmet Pasha, to pursue and capture Muhammed Bey and his allies.

The Van and Diyarbakir *Beylerbeyis* were not up to the task, however. The sultan had to send another order to the powerful ruler of Bitilis, Muhammed Said Bey,

requesting that he join the fight against the bandits. He did, yet by 1704 the Yezidi bandits and Muhammed Bey of Şirvi continued their siege on Siirt. The urgency in Sultan Ahmed III's call for action is evident in his renewed orders to the Van *Beylerbeyi*, Ahmet Pasha, stating, "Due to the ongoing oppression of the people, and this matter being important, I repeat and reconfirm my orders to the Van *Beylerbeyi*."³⁵ Official orders for military participation were also now including dispatches to the smaller rulers of the provincial subdivisions.

Nevertheless, the Ottoman state failed to stop the brigands, reflecting in this case its low level of state capacity in the region. Until November 1726, correspondences to the ruler of Hazzo, the Bey of Sirvi *Sancak*, the deputy governor (*mütesellimi*) of Diyarbakir, and the warden of Şirvan castle indicate that public disorder in the area continued (see Seçkin 2006:112). Ahmet Aga, one of the main Ottoman tax inspectors and "defenders of the sultanate," gave a sobering report to the court in Istanbul about the conditions in Siirt and the tax revenue flowing in from the tax-farming system of the province. For a number of years, the Şirvan brigands, led by Hacı Receb and his cousin Muhammed, had been coming into Siirt's town, looting the travelers on the roads, and cutting into the empire's finances. They had hindered the payment of taxes to the state. The rebels went as far as to expropriate lands that the Ottoman state had allotted for the tax-farming system, joining forces with other bandits, and taking control of properties around the central town of Siirt. They chased away the Ottoman official involved in the collection of revenue from the tax-farming system. Archival evidence does not show any clear resolution to this conflict (Seçkin 2006:113). Perhaps, the Ottoman Empire dealt with

³⁵Seçkin (2006:112) provides the quote: "Eşkiyanın henüz halk üzerindeki baskıları kalkmayıp, bu iş önemli olmakla Van Beylerbeyi'ne tekrar ve teyid edici emrim olmuştur..."

these rebels as they usually had with such cases on the peripheries of their territories, by incorporating them into the empire as salaried officials (see Barkey 1994). But such an approach could hardly put in place the structures of future stability.

External pressures on the empire, similar to the case of Spanish Chiapas, led it to try and reassert and even attempt to expand its hegemonic control in Kurdistan.³⁶ After an Afghani invasion of Iran's eastern fronts in 1721, the Ottoman Sadrazam Damat Ibrahim Pasha opportunistically also invaded Iran, but soon found himself embroiled in a quagmire of conflict which blew up in 16 years of full-scale war until 1746. The wars decimated the population and economy of Kurdistan with every adult male forced to fight. Much of the population also fled. An imperial decree of 1759 (Seçkin 2006:113) notes with concern the loss of population due to flight, and requested that officials act to prevent migration towards Iran.

The wars, nevertheless, continued. Conflicts continued to erupt with the Iranians in 1806 and 1811, and again ending without a definitive resolution. As a result of no clear hegemonic victor, the Kurdish principalities continued to maintain their semi-independent status. "The status quo was thus more or less maintained, with Kurdistan as almost a third country as a buffer between the feuding parties" (O'Shea 2004:83). Such a condition, of course, was a major cause for concern for the rival empires. The 1823 Treaty of Erzurum was a renewed attempt to establish recognized boundaries in which both sides agreed not to intervene in matters across the border. It was also the first treaty between the empires with mention of the name "Kurdistan," the migration of the Kurdish

³⁶ Seçkin (2006:113) argues that the Empire, due to its territorial losses in Europe that came with the 1718 Treaty of Pasarofça, sought compensation by initiating wars against the Iranians in the east.

tribes, and the need to regulate of border-crossing populations, especially those trying to evade conscription (O’Shea 2004).

Ottoman Kurdistan in the eighteenth century, similar to colonial Chiapas, reflected a breakdown in the social order, as brigands, wars, and the rival interests of Ottoman officials and local Kurdish emirs wore away at the structures of stability put in place since the sixteenth century. Much of the local native populations suffered as a result.

Both the Spanish and Ottoman empires had at best been able to maintain a tenuous hold on their respective peripheries at the end of the eighteenth century. The centers of the empires continued to face challenges, assuring that major changes and disruptions would afflict Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Emerging were new political groups, new political and social structures, and there was a greater sharpening of the political fissures, leading to the outbreak of new violences.

3.6 The Nineteenth Century

The specter of a buffer zone came back to haunt both Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan at the start of this century. This section will discuss how buffer zone politics—the chaos and the competition for power—came to influence the radical political and social changes of the nineteenth century in these two regions, and how the powerful tensions of that century left a lasting imprint on the twentieth century.³⁷

³⁷ Again, the analytical approach of focusing on the buffer zone or peripheral qualities of both Chiapas and Kurdistan reflect a new era of scholarship. As Aubry (2005:89-90) writes, new historical sources of the “period 1810 to 1824, since the beginnings of Independence, provide a vision of the insurgency from the periphery, from the margins among the main actors. It is a fresh view of history, elaborated with sources

3.6.1 Chiapas

It is because of the nature of buffer zone politics that Wasserstrom (1989[1983]:129) writes that by 1821 in Chiapas, “the unstable and weak structures of colonial domination were incapable of supporting the forces that weighed upon it.” These pressures included not only the local elite’s resistance to the pressures of the newly implemented structure of tribute extraction in the form of the French-inspired intendent system, as already noted, but a conservative reaction against the idea of a Spanish Republic in favor of a Creole monarch in the form of Emperor Iturbide of a newly independent Mexico. Iturbide pulled at the Chiapan elite for unification away from both Guatemala and Spain. He presented the Creole elite of Ciudad Real with the comfortable option of replacing one empire, the Spanish, with another, the Mexican. These pressures then created new fissures that prompted the American travel writer, John L. Stephens to note in 1841 following his visit to Chiapas, “War is coming again, and while the rest of Mexico is peaceful, the southeast is on the eve of a true revolution” (quoted in Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:129).

By the late eighteenth century, the Audience of Guatemala had fallen into an administrative crisis. A major earthquake destroyed La Antigua, the capital of the Kingdom of Guatemala, in 1773. Significant divisions emerged among those who wanted to reconstruct the capital and those who wanted to move it. The move occurred to New Guatemala, despite resistance, which in turn highlighted the need for reform in the empire. Francisco Polanco, a new bishop arrived in Ciudad Real, 1777-1784. He was a man of the Enlightenment, and in his reports to the Spanish King he emphasized the deplorable conditions afflicting Chiapas. Polanco noted the “back-and-forth flow of

close to the street, the battlefields, the homes, and even to the level of palace intrigues of the political class of the old and new regimes.”

money at the cost of the sweat and blood of the Indians” (quoted in Aubry 2005:91). Assuredly, he took note of the mafia-like structure in which corrupt royal officials, such as the regional *alcaldes mayores*, built alliances with the local Creole elites, and how together they formed armed groups in order to exploit and extort the Indian communities. Polanco, who saw himself as a reincarnation of the Bishop Bartolomae de Las Casas of the sixteenth century, distrusted all the intermediate hierarchies in Chiapas and communicated only with the Spanish crown. The crown, in turn, abolished the *alcalde mayor* position and introduced the intendent system for better regulation of tributary exaction. This was an effort by the empire to reassert its autonomy, but it only served to increase the ire of the local Creoles.

Regionalisms had taken hold of Chiapas. It was geographically and demographically varied and uneven. Its system of communication was very poor, and, as noted, it lacked any dominant hegemonic power, politically and economically. Vázquez Olivera (2005:55-56) notes that “although they controlled the trade routes and the financial credits of the kingdom, the wealthy Guatemalan merchants failed to translate their predominance into a true leadership.” Instead, their greed only provoked strong anti-Guatemalan sentiments in certain parts of Chiapas, helping to foster separatist sentiments. Vázquez Olivera adds that the intendent system promoted greater linkages with New Spain than with Guatemala. These conditions contributed to the further institutional split within the prominent Dominican order in Chiapas, which complained of having to send its economic gains to its superiors in Guatemala.

Friar Matías de Córdova (see Aubry 2005)—a brilliant student of Bishop Polanco who had paved the way for the formation of a new elite in Chiapas—headed the Chiapan

Dominicans and pushed for separation from Guatemala. With the help of allies such as the intendent Agustín de las Cuentas Zayas, de Córdova went to Spain in 1802.

Influenced by Napoleonic populism following the upheavals of the French invasion of Spain, de Córdova returned to Chiapas working to strengthen the autonomy of Chiapas.

Aubry (2005) points out that in 1812, two years after New Spain had begun its independence movement, it was widely believed that the Chiapan border at the Tehuantepec Isthmus would effectively serve to contain the uprising. Those who feared the insurgency in New Spain fled to Chiapas across this border. Then in 1813, Morelos' (one of Mexico's heroes of the independence) second in command, Mariano Matamoros crossed the border at Tonalá and captured it. With that began the insurgency in Chiapas. The battle for Tonalá, however, did not grow into a larger war. But it did engender fear and confusion throughout Chiapas. Roads became closed while Indian messengers secretly relayed the communications of the insurgency. The military roamed fearfully, ignorant of who the insurgents were, and the political elite of Chiapas were more interested in evacuating their families back to Spain than in dealing with the rebels (Aubry 2005). Meanwhile, many Franciscan clerics along with other priests were working to help the insurrection. New actors with ideas of republicanism were also emerging in Guatemala and throughout Central America. But what was unique in Chiapas was that the insurgency gradually won the support of all the social classes (starting with the indigenous communities in 1813, which invoked fear among the dominant Creoles), leading to the declaration of independence in 1821 by the ruling Creoles. This reflected a kind of opportunism among the Chiapan elites (Aubry 2005).

On August 28, 1821, the official declaration of independence was finalized early in the morning in the chambers of Matías de Córdova in Comitán. The declaration resulted in the abolishment of the payment of tribute to Guatemala and included an adherence to the Mexican empire under Iturbide and a promise of support for similar movements throughout the Audience of Guatemala. Aubry (2005) writes that the most efficient means for Chiapas to separate itself from Guatemala was to unite with Mexico. Chiapas had formally attempted this for the first time in 1822. For the powerful conservative bloc of Ciudad Real, Emperor Augustín de Iturbide of Mexico served as a powerful “alternative to the Spanish empire in solidifying its regional aspirations” (Aubry 2005:100). Buffer zone politics was certainly playing out again in Chiapas as Spanish influence ebbed.

In 1824, Chiapas opted again for union with Mexico which maintained a military presence and aided in the capture of the provisional government of Chiapas (*La Junta Suprema Provisional*) by the conservatives of Ciudad Real. With its union with Mexico, Chiapas “inherited” the unceasing, increasingly violent “continental” conflict between conservatives and liberals (Aubry 2005:100). These two groups divided the state geographically. The federalists, later to become the liberals, were centered in the lowland capital of Tuxtla, and the centralists, or conservatives in the royal tradition, were centered in the colonial and highland capital of Ciudad Real or San Cristóbal.

San Cristóbal was the traditional capital of the state and the base of its diocese. As we saw in the previous section, its elite consisted of the civil and religious bureaucrats, along with the landlords of the large estates who made their living through the rents and taxes collected from the large Indian populations of the surrounding areas. With

independence, the highland elites believed they were the rightful inheritors of the power and privilege that stemmed from the crown and the colonial church. “Accordingly, they campaigned for a government of continuity after 1821—a centralized, paternalistic regime that would not only preserve the status quo but deliver it into their hands” (Rus 1996:46).

The lowlands, as we have seen, had become the commercial agricultural center of the province. Ranchers and merchants headed this region, and were eager to expand their economic hold through the capture of more land and greater control of Indian labor. They feared that the centralists of San Cristóbal were trying to monopolize the resources of the state. Therefore, the lowland elites sought a federal governmental structure after 1821 that could promise them local autonomy to organize their region according to their interests.

Rus (1996) notes that the conflict between liberals and conservatives was never really about which ideals and models of society should rule, as it was about the struggle over the division of spoils left by the Spanish colonial structure. Since no particular hegemonic power had established itself, Chiapas was still gripped in a naked struggle for power. Accordingly, the liberal-conservative schism took on a particular form in Chiapas. While throughout Mexico, the liberals had declared that all Mexicans were equal and that the Indian castes should be transformed into modern social classes, in Chiapas they accepted only that their own class, being the class of commerce, should be privileged. The Indians were to serve the liberals in their project of expanding commerce by continuing to pay their form of tribute (*la capitación*) and thus have their vassalage further entrenched. Freed from the pressures of the corrupt governors of the colonial era,

the liberal Creoles took over vast tracts of land, converting them into sizeable haciendas and cattle ranches. These were supported by new incoming investments from Britain, France, and soon the United States (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]).

The liberal-conservative struggle, consequently, manifested itself primarily over Indian land, labor, and tax revenue, exacerbated by the demographic imbalance of the state.³⁸ The surest way to obtain access to these resources was through the control of office, as in the colonial tradition. The pursuit to capture office positions was so strong for the ambitious men of both sides that instability and revolts became endemic. Chiapas had more than twenty-five governors before 1850, and this chronic instability came at the expense of the conditions of the Indian population (Rus 1996), primarily through the loss of their lands.

Starting in 1826, as the state government was forming, the national government of Mexico began to impose taxes and required contributions from Chiapas. Because the state government was bankrupt and in disarray, it started to progressively encourage landowners in 1827, 1828, 1832, up until 1844, to invade Indian lands and register them as their own (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]). Spanish rule had classified many Indian lands as “vacant lands” (*terrenos baldíos*), holding them in trust as a buffer around Indian communities, who were confined to the towns and villages around their churches. The vacant lands were also off limits to the Ladinos. The desire and need to exploit these lands led the successive state governments to legally simplify the manner in which

³⁸ In 1819, the Central Highlands had a Ladino population of 5,677 and an Indian population of 56,389 or 54% of the total for that group. The Central Lowlands had a Ladino population 4,706, and an Indian population of 7,312 or 7% of the total. (Other areas had a total Ladino population of 12,315 and 40,461 Indians, or 39% of the total.) (see Rus 1996:47).

private citizens could “denounce” and claim them. By 1850, “virtually all the state’s Indian communities had been stripped of their ‘excess’ lands” (Rus 1996:47).

The effects on the Indian populations were profound. In the lowlands, during the 1830s and 40s, aggressive Ladino farmers drove out whole Indian villages. These populations soon constituted the “assimilated” underclass of Ladino towns (Rus 1996). In the more densely populated, less fertile and less economically developed highlands, whole Indian towns became incorporated into large feudal estates. Small central *ejidos* were excluded.³⁹

Chamula, in the central highlands, is a good example of the kind of land grab that took place and the dramatic social and political changes coming that followed. In 1846, the Larrainzar family, through their “denunciations,” took hold of three-fourths of the Chamulan’s land (Rus 1996).⁴⁰ Two townships were also expropriated in the process and incorporated in the estate of Nuevo Edén. Despite not being legally allowed to do so, many Indians had been living in the unprotected lands outside the *ejido* because of population pressures since the mid-eighteenth century. Consequently, most turned into serfs, laboring on sugar and tobacco production for the Larráinzar family. Moreover, more modest highland Ladinos also took advantage of the land denunciation law, in addition to predatory loan practices and alcohol sales, to take over Indian lands. Ladino farmers established themselves in just about every town by 1850, and in doing so transformed “more than a quarter of Chiapas’s Indians from ‘free’ villagers into permanently—and legally—obligated peons and laborers” (Rus 1996:48).

³⁹ Rus (1996:47) writes, “Of the twenty-five intact Tzotzil and Tzeltal townships that existed at independence, all suffered this fate to one degree or another.”

⁴⁰ Rus (1996:48) notes that 467 *caballerías* (47,600 acres) out of a total of 636 *caballerías*. With the two townships, the new estate consisted of 874 *caballerías* total.

This parceling of land further fostered the political regionalisms that already existed. By 1840, the liberals and the conservatives each had imposed their own style of administration over the indigenous communities. While the natives were promised a certain amount of autonomy in local matters, in practice non-Indian officials and political bosses in charge of the area extensively supervised the activities of the leaderships of the indigenous communities (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]). This only heightened the competition between the liberals and conservatives for control over Indians labor. Thus the right to exploit the Indian became one of the primary bases for conflict in Chiapas.

The Chiapan state after independence clearly reflected institutional weakness. The conservative state government, which had come to power with independence and then unification with Mexico clearly lacked the capacity and political will to establish a professional and politically disinterested bureaucracy. The conservative Chiapan state government had given over the everyday affairs of the Indian communities to the Church, as during the colonial period. The parish priests oversaw the collection of community statistics, census, tax rolls, and taxes. Since most of the Indians were concentrated in the highlands, the Church basically controlled the state budget (Rus:1996).

The primary source of income came from the head tax imposed on the Indian communities. The collection of the tax was largely in the hands of the Church, enforced with the support of the state militia. The Church's base was the highlands where the Indian population was mainly concentrated, and it had a strong interest in controlling that population as dues-paying parishioners. The liberals felt further threatened by the current institutional structure and contributed to the sharp regionalisms that already existed

The regionalisms also contributed to a general lawlessness, which prevented the effective buildup of state revenues that in turn could have been used to develop Chiapas' infrastructure and institutions. The flourishing of a large black-market economy is an example of this. As commerce grew in the lowlands after 1832, suddenly merchants had the capital to sustain an elaborate black-market network bringing in European goods from Villahermosa, Guatemala, and Belize (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]).

The lawlessness and the continuing struggle for power led to 18 changes of government in 17 years from 1838-1855. Governors battled the opposing parties or switched sides momentarily to the liberal and conservative options, forcing four of these leaders to engage in open battles, flee, or fall into prison. Internal warfare became a recurring theme, and with it came heavy tolls on the population. Indians were forced to serve in the militaries, and ranches had to house and feed the troops. Consequently, Aubry (2005:114) writes that "Chiapas is immersed in chaos" during this period.

This chaos had its impact on the infrastructure regulating daily life. There were no schools, no state institutions with the requisite personnel to run matters of government. Agricultural challenges, such as crop plagues, could not be tended to. Moreover, indigenous peasants already had heavy burdens placed on them as serfs, having to work without pay for a certain number of days a week or month for the large landlords, in addition to the already heavy burden of the head tax (*capitación*) that they were struggling to pay—a holdover of the colonial era.

Chiapas was a setting of competing hegemonies and violences. Power emanated from anyone who controlled land and the population on that land. As the historian Thomas Benjamin described it, "in Chiapas a rancher and the government are the same

thing” (quoted in Aubry 2005:116). The seat of power in Chiapas, therefore, constantly shifted from San Cristóbal to Tuxtla, Chiapa, or to Jitotal (Aubry 2005).

What is surprising, as Jan Rus (1996) points out, is that the Indians did not rebel, despite the heavy burdens increasingly placed upon them. The tensions and instability that existed in the first thirty years after independence emanated solely from the Ladino elites of the liberal and conservative camps. The unstable nature of power in Chiapas further fed the Ladinos’ intense fears of losing control over their Indian population. There was an increasing belief on their part that a race war was inevitable and imminent. This fear seems to have noticeably become evident after the mid-1840s when Indian exploitation reached its peak (see Rus 1996). Panic followed the 1848 Caste War of Yucatán, fed by rumors that Tzeltal Indians of several towns were organizing secret meetings in order plan a similar uprising in Chiapas. Many Indian “ringleaders” were arrested and sent to San Cristóbal, and Ladino settlers fled the outlying areas back to the capital.

The regionalisms and conflicts of the 1830s and 40s turned into open civil war by 1855, lasting until 1864. The highland conservatives in the early 1850s sought boldly to retaliate against the lowland Ladinos for attacking the highland structure of serfdom and *ejido* laws in the late 1840s. The conservatives focused on destroying the lowland agricultural economy by outlawing the export of cattle and by attempting to abolish the titles given to them for the *baldios* (Rus 1996). This pushed the liberals to join the national liberal movement of Mexico, including its anticlericalism (Rus 1996:50). The Church hierarchy of San Cristóbal, on the other hand, openly sided with the conservatives of Mexico behind the authoritarian Santa Ana.

The liberal overthrow of the national Mexican government was the event that plunged both central Mexico and Chiapas into war, “the principal distinction being that Chiapas’s wars were fought not by national armies, but entirely by bands representing the state’s own sharply-defined regional factions” (Rus 1996:51), reflecting again the vacuum of any central state hegemony. In Mexico the War of Reform did not end with the liberal recapture of the seat of power in Mexico City in 1861. Unyielding conservatives found allies among Spain, France, and England who (using similar arguments of unpaid debts as they used with the Ottoman Empire) invaded. While England and Spain quickly withdrew, the French stayed until 1867 trying to impose a European style Catholic king to the delight of the Mexican conservatives.

In Chiapas the War of Reform began with an uprising led by Juan Ortega in July 1856. He acted upon the anti-Reform pronouncements that came from central Mexico just a few months prior. The Ortega movement was based in Comitán and gained support in the highlands, the bastion of conservatism in Chiapas. It took the form of an ongoing guerrilla war against the state’s liberal constitutional authorities. Guatemala, still angry over its loss of Chiapas supported the Ortega uprising (Aubry 2005).⁴¹ The liberals were forced from the region, moving the capital from San Cristóbal to Chiapa. The revolt lasted until late 1860. The capital returned to its highland seat in February of 1861.

The Tzotzil Indian involvement in the war seems to be a mixed story (see Rus 1996). The Tzotzil’s showed some support to the liberal government of 1855 because that forced important conservative politicians to sell the lands back to the Indians. Others,

⁴¹ External pressures continued to challenge Chiapas’s borders. Guatemala was also involved in a power struggle among local rulers in Soconusco, while simultaneously supporting the Ortega insurgency. Conservative factions from Oaxaca and Tabasco were also threatening and attacking Chiapas’ borders (Aubry 2005). Tabasco had become a base for 3,000 French soldiers and after 1861 became a source of support for Ortega’s uprising

because of the leadership of their priests, gave supplies and acted as bearers to the conservative rebels. The overall ambivalence among the Indians, however, probably had more to do with their awareness that neither Ladino faction was interested in helping them. Yet, the war, 1856-1861, brought some relief to indigenous communities. It freed them from crippling head and religious taxes, and from forced labor as the war disrupted Ladino commerce.

The liberals arrived in power in 1861. Their new government tried to impose its control in the highlands. They sought to bring revenue back to the state treasury, appointing new municipal secretaries and attempting to re-impose the head tax. Yet foreign pressure once again disrupted the growth of state hegemony. The 1862 French invasion prevented liberal reforms, as the central Mexican state demanded manpower for its campaigns against the foreigners.

The conservatives found the opportunity to regroup in the highlands, moving to reestablish their dominance over the Indian communities. Priests acted as conservative “emissaries.” Again, the Indians offered a mixed reception to the priests (Rus 1996). On the one hand, the natives appreciated their religious leadership. On the other, they knew that the odious religious taxes would soon resume. In fact, the presence of liberal municipal secretaries brought added tensions. As the secretaries informed the natives that they no longer had to pay the religious taxes, priests found Indian deception, evasiveness, along with outright refusal—as liberal municipal secretaries goaded them on—when it came to paying their dues to the church.⁴² These tensions, I would argue, reflect that the

⁴²Rus (1996:52) refers to an 1862 report in which Chamula’s new priest, Manuel María Suárez, was quoted as saying in an interview to community leaders, “I exhorted them to comply with their ancient obligations and duties to the Church, to which they replied that it was only a shortage of grain that had prevented them from doing so in recent years, but that, their harvest completed, they will again begin to pay.” This

Indian village itself had increasingly become the center for liberal-conservative factional fighting over hegemony.

But French victories against the liberals in central Mexico led Chiapan conservatives to redouble their efforts to regain their traditional control of the highlands. Local liberals increasingly felt insecure as Mexico's struggle against the imperialists sapped its financial and military resources, and its means of communication with Chiapas. Liberal loss of control forced them to move the capital once again on January 1, 1863, this time to Tuxtla. Ortega again started a war campaign to rid the liberals and succeeded in taking over San Cristóbal in August. The conservative elites of the city welcomed him in, pledging loyalty to him and his "intervention" and the rebirth of the "Mexican Empire" (Rus 1996:53).

Ortega dedicated the rest of 1863 to strengthening his army and in conquering highland holdout communities. His army of 1200 men, with many recruited by the help of the parish priest of Chamula, marched on Chiapa in late October, but was beaten back by the local militia of the town. The liberals in ten weeks succeeded in recapturing San Cristóbal, leaving the center of the city in ruins, but suffered many casualties among its mostly Indian force. Ortega's army fled back into the mountains.

Meanwhile the Indian communities suffered dramatic pressures during the wars. The liberals conscripted men. The conservatives took even more natives into their army, forced them into labor crews building fortifications around San Cristóbal, and still made

particular case of a supposed grain shortage, according to Rus, was an example of evasion because "during the same period, the Indians of other communities, prompted by their secretaries, refused outright to pay the church." Interestingly, the outright refusal to pay, as prompted by liberal secretaries, reveals perhaps a greater and more direct conflict emerging in the communities themselves over which of the rival factions would have hegemonic control over them. In any case, conservative power in Chamula ensured that the religious taxes were collected, including retroactively in the 1860s, reflecting a rollback of whatever liberal inroads there were in the highlands.

them pay their religious taxes as priests now had the force of the conservative-imperialist army behind them (Rus 1996). In addition, priests and municipal secretaries lobbied the Indian communities to rise against one another. Rus (1996:53) argues that this was “profoundly traumatic” for the natives: “Whereas traditionally such communities had maintained strong chains of command firmly attuned to the dominant ladino authorities, now they were being forced to choose among competing authorities, none of whom could offer much certainty even of its own tenure.” Fears of retaliation from both sides meant that the Indians had to carefully navigate the situation. Such pressures, not surprisingly, led to communal instability. Chamula suffered major disturbances and violence in 1862 and 1863, including attempts on the life of the parish priest who was trying to mobilize members of the community against the liberals.

The liberals won the war against Ortega and the conservatives in 1864, but the French continued their hold on central Mexico until 1867. Chiapas thus defeated the conservative-imperialist challenge before the rest of the country, solidifying once more its situation as a “place apart” with power structures at variance with the rest of the state. The lowland elites now began squabbling among themselves for control of state power and the military. While General Porfirio Díaz, in charge of the liberal resistance in Mexico, continued his fight against the French, he declared the constitutional order in Chiapas disrupted and appointed his friend General Pantaleón Domínguez. The process started a tradition of largely weak military commanders ruling Chiapas (Aubry 2005). Ortega, for instance, went unpunished for his uprising and simply returned to his estate near Comitán. Further, since the damage to the national economy signified also the loss of demand for Chiapan agricultural goods, the liberals had little reason to try and

mobilize highland labor for a shrinking commercial agricultural economy. The liberal regime thus did not come to solidify its control of the highlands, even though they had “captured” the state (Rus 1996).

Domínguez had to continue to contend with conservative/imperialist insurgents in the countryside, and with rebellious liberals from 1864-1867. When Mexico finally expelled the French, Domínguez had himself appointed Chiapas’s constitutional governor. But still too weak to fully implement punishment on the conservative elites of San Cristóbal who had supported the imperialists, Domínguez sought more “passive means of revenge” (Rus 1996:55). He nearly cut off all public spending in the highlands, appointed lowlanders to all public offices, and made attempts to block all flow of weapons and ammunition to the region. More importantly, however, Domínguez’s government only put in a “half-hearted” effort (Rus 1996:55) in stemming the Church’s control over the Indian communities and their labor.

Liberal-conservative tensions only seemed to grow after 1867.⁴³ As the Mexican state decreed that all state capitals had to return to their original cities, Chiapan lowlanders saw this as a threat to their economic power just when they were reestablishing themselves. Liberals feared that the highlanders would once again control indigenous labor. Domínguez moved the state capital, not from Tuxtla to San Cristóbal, but to Chiapa to try and appease the liberals.

The liberals redoubled their efforts to attack the Church in late 1867. This time they attacked not just the Church’s financial structure in the Indian villages, but also its influence over native religious life, which seemed to have some success in turning the

⁴³ Rus (1996:55) argues that the Mexican state’s efforts to reconcile the opposing sides in 1867 had only the “opposite effect” in Chiapas—yet more evidence of the region as a “place apart” in Mexico.

indigenous communities against the Ladino hierarchy of the Church (Rus 1996). By the late 1860s, Indians now worked with the liberal municipal secretaries to repudiate priests that opposed state policies.

Tensions between the native communities and the Church augmented dramatically. Dramatic declines in Church revenue led it to try and reimpose the religious taxes and structure of the 1850s. In turn, now with state sanction, the Indians had the option of withdrawing from the Church and village-market centers and to establish new ones on their own. Such actions among the Indians provoked a powerful Ladino reaction that ultimately led to a major outbreak of violence in 1869 (Rus 1996).

The turning away from the church led to a political restructuring for Indian communities. Now that the traditional church hierarchy had been weakened, the *fiscales* began to fill the void, and with it there came a kind of revival of nativist religious practices. The *fiscales* were the Indian brokers for the Church hierarchy and the local community. “They were, in fact, the closest thing to a native clergy” (Rus 1996:58). They served as interpreters for the priests, kept parish records, taught catechism, and led religious services when the priest was not available. *Fiscales* had authority and charisma, and one such *fiscal*, Pedro Díaz Cuzcat from Chamula, began attracting people towards a new cult in 1868. Cuzcat created a shrine in Tzahalemel which soon grew to become one of the highland’s major market centers (Rus 1996).

Highland conservatives quickly became concerned as the Tzahalemel began to draw commerce away from Ladino towns. The lowlanders saw an added opportunity to weaken highland Ladino control. The latter’s worst fears seemed to be coming true; a “caste war” was beginning. The Ladinos of San Cristóbal organized self-defense units

and sent for aid throughout the highlands. Still, with the tacit endorsement of the liberal government, the temple at Tzahalemel and its associated festivals kept growing. The conservative leaders of San Cristóbal saw this as a separatist movement and sent an armed dispatch on December 2, 1868, to put it down.

These Indian actions of asserting both religious and economic autonomy sparked a conservative-imperialist political revival in the highlands following 1864 (Rus 1996). For example, a new newspaper, *La Brijula*, emerged in 1869 calling for the return of the state capital back to San Cristóbal, along with its former political and economic dominance. In addition to regularly attacking the state government, the newspaper called on it to aid in reestablishing and equipping the highland militia, as well as providing funds for repairing the city of the damages caused by the war in 1863-1864.

The lowlands, on the other hand, fell into political divisions over taxes and what many felt was government neglect of the infrastructure for a recovering economy. More importantly, however, they blamed the state government for not establishing “positive control” (Rus 1996:61) over the native communities. The lowlanders were also fearful of the Indian push for greater autonomy.

Domínguez, in response to popular pressures, sought to placate critics and quietly assert his political authority over the state. He allowed the conservatives to move against Tzajalhemel, and in 1869 he re-implemented the head tax with the purpose of obtaining two much needed assets: public funding for services, and the support and favor of local officials who stood to receive eight percent commission on the taxes they collected. These collectors were given the authority to indefinitely jail members of the town councils in all towns. These taxes and associated coercive powers only drove the Indians

back into staking out autonomous communities such as Tzajalhemel. As a consequence, Ladino commerce suffered and Church attendance dropped (Rus 1996).

Ladino fervor in San Cristóbal, in turn, called for greater military action to rein in the Indian communities. Ladino fears became exacerbated when a defender of indigenous rights, Ignacio Fernández de Galindo, a liberal teacher from Central Mexico, left San Cristóbal in order to warn the Indian communities of an impending attack. Many in San Cristóbal saw Galindo as the successor to Cuzcat, and viewed his escape to the natives as an attempt to mobilize them for an “all-out attack on whites” (Rus 1996:62).

The ambush and killing of Father Martínez of Chamula and his entourage, who had gone to Tzajalhemel to talk “sense” into the Indians, marked the a final incident that would lead to the “Caste War” of 1869-1870. Other incidents occurred in which Indians attacked Ladinos with whom they apparently had scores to settle (Rus 1996). Further, Galindo led several thousand Indians to San Cristóbal in order to obtain the release of Cuzcat. These developments stoked Ladino fears to new heights.⁴⁴

Instead of a swift sense of unity emerging from the events in and around San Cristóbal, governor Domínguez activated the military forces as a ploy to consolidate power in the face of his diminishing popularity.⁴⁵ His sending of several hundred troops for the defense of San Cristóbal marked the beginning of military action that would end with the massacre of highland Indians. Ladino leaders of the Church and the businesses

⁴⁴ Jan Rus (1996:64) refers to the Ladino newspaper of San Cristóbal, *La Brújula*, who wrote of the Indian presence that there “no longer be any doubt that the Indians were sworn enemies of the whites,” and that their intention was to “ravish and kill San Cristóbal’s tender wives and sisters, to mutilate the corpses of its children.” The newspaper called for a “war to the death between barbarism and civilization.” It was claimed that such a war could for the first time achieve Ladino unity.

⁴⁵ Governor Domínguez’s party faced elections for local office in the lowlands at around the same time of the Indian march to San Cristóbal in June of 1869. His party’s defeat signified a “no-confidence” vote against Domínguez. By mobilizing the state militia for the support of San Cristóbal he “sidestepped” his own ouster from power (Rus 1996:65).

of the highlands wanted revenge for the Indian boycott of their interests and called for an unyielding military response (Rus 1996).

But Domínguez used his military power more for the interests of lowland state government at the detriment of the highlanders (Rus 1996). He placed key natives loyal to him as state functionaries in charge of each pacified community. These native officials were charged with proving their loyalty by mobilizing the rest to go after remaining rebels. Domínguez left most of his state militia, consisting mainly of lowlanders, in San Cristóbal in order to continue to maintain a lowland presence in the highland capital. The Ladino attacks in the highlands killed and displaced many Indians. Domínguez's policies also incorporated many Indians as soldiers who continued the work of hunting down rebels. By the summer of 1870, the Ladinos thought the "Caste War" over.

The "Caste War" seemingly brought with it lowland control over the highland Indians. The Church went back to its activities in the highlands but did not have the same power as it did before the 1860s. The Church's weakened position ensured that the Indian communities would organize their religious life more independently of a central ecclesiastical authority (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]).

Nevertheless, the highland conservatives were given some authority over the Indians, though limited compared to situation before the conflict. The state capital returned to San Cristóbal in 1872. The conservatives continued to have access to the highland Indian communities as civil servants and merchants, and thus still exploited them. The lowland elites, now with access to indigenous labor, allowed the highlanders to

“administer” and “organize” Indian labor on their behalf (Rus 1996:68).⁴⁶ Highland conservatives were briefly placated.

By the 1880s, however, the conservatives regrouped once again around their political interests. The lowlanders had begun moving towards greater integration with Mexico and had neglected San Cristóbal for twenty years. Through discussion with Mexico City, the lowlanders started pushing for a permanent move of the state capital to Tuxtla. The central lowlands, of which Tuxtla was the administrative center, had its cattle, sugarcane, and cotton production flourishing, and strong links with the large plantations of coffee and fruit of the Pacific coast. The lowland liberals were making plans with the Mexican state to connect lowland Chiapas with the rest of the country through a rail system.

Seeing themselves becoming politically and economically marginalized, the highland elite reacted. Using the “Cast War” of 1869-70 as a justification, the highland conservatives claimed that San Cristóbal’s vital role as a capital had been to impose order on the indigenous communities (Rus 1996). Writings flourished in the 1880s discussing for the first time the history of the “Caste War” from chauvinistic Ladino perspectives. These perspectives only reinforced the long-held fear of the native as a savage waiting to overthrow Ladino control.

Nevertheless, the federal government sided with the lowland liberals in 1892, authorizing the transfer of the capital to Tuxtla. The governor Emilio Rabasa was a political ally of the Mexican president Porfirio Díaz. The lowland liberals went further in

⁴⁶ Rus (1996) argues that the highland indigenous communities were pacified to the point to which they adopted a narrative of the uprising similar to the conservative Ladino version, in which the Ladino reaction was defensive and justifiable in the face of a fanatical Cuzcat whose murderous followers sought to destroy the social order.

1896 and began to bypass the mediation of the highland elites in incorporating the Indian communities just north of San Cristóbal. Heeding the highland Ladino discourse of the untrustworthy savage, the lowland liberals militarized its efforts to directly control the Indians. Lowland troops were placed in the major communities in order to oversee the curtailment of native governments and the enforcement of labor contracts.

But the move of the capital sparked another wave of political instability and conflicts over the seat of power. From 1891 to 1910, up until the eve of the Mexican revolution, Chiapas saw thirty-two governors come and go. Despite lowland liberal victories, no politically hegemonic power emerged. The state still did not have control in many remote areas. Despite laws and attempts to implement liberal policies, capitalism did not replace feudalism in the local power structure. In fact, Wasserstrom (1989[1983]:185) argues that many Ladino politicians had developed an “ambivalent” attitude towards *laissez-faire* capitalism, believing instead that coercion was the way to deal with the Indians.

Part of this ambivalent attitude was due to the continued presence of many conservatives loyal to the *ancien régime* who vehemently opposed the federal and republican principles of the Porfiriato, or anything emanating from Mexico, including the revolutionary winds from the northern part of the country that overthrew Porfirio Diaz.⁴⁷ Chiapas’ rugged terrain contributed to the political and social divisions. While new highways were being built connecting the lowlands to the rest of the republic, the infrastructure linking Tuxtla to San Cristóbal was still very limited, so much so that Aubry (2005:137) comments that by the 1890s traveling from Tuxtla to San Cristóbal

⁴⁷The conservative opposition was never completely destroyed, as the rebellious Ortega of the 1850s simply settled back to his ranch after his military defeat.

was more problematic than traveling by rail from Tuxtla to the center of Mexico or even to Oaxaca. The highlands still resisted integration into Mexico while the central lowlands of the state became increasingly tied to the regime of the central state, contributing to the political and social unevenness of Chiapas. Moreover, much of Chiapas, particularly the Lacandón jungle, was still unknown geographically, and border disputes with Guatemala continued unresolved.⁴⁸

Chiapas still existed in a state of war. The oppression of the Indian population⁴⁹ went unabated as they found themselves caught in the middle of the warring factions. The conservatives of San Cristóbal conspired against Porfirian influence centered in Tuxtla. Bishop Francisco Orosco y Jiménez of San Cristóbal led the conservative opposition. In 1903 he played to the discontent of the native communities in trying to get them to rise up against Tuxtla, and organized a network of Ladinos and Indians to serve as an alternative regional government (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]). These divisions came to a head in 1911 at the start of the Mexican Revolution. As Chiapas fell back into open warfare, it posed as a counter-revolutionary threat to the emerging revolutionary Mexican government that came into power in 1917 seeking to integrate the region.

3.6.2 The Nineteenth Century: Ottoman Kurdistan

⁴⁸ Aubry (2005:138) comments, “Modernity could not enter Chiapas while the extensions, limits, and characteristics of its virginal lands were not known with scientific exactness...” The central state contracted out this process to international companies, giving them the right to take ownership of the lands they mapped.

Border disputes continued to be present in places such as Soconusco at least until 1910 where Guatemalan currency continued to be used (see García de León 1994[1985]).

⁴⁹Wasserstrom (1989[1983]:186) notes that the pressures from civil authorities led many Indian families to form corporate groups that resembled precolombian lineages, types of tribal groups that the Spanish ironically had been intent on destroying. Similarly, the state’s civil authorities’ push for parochial taxes (now that they had weakened the Church) to be levied on the Indian communities in large part led to the formation of new hierarchies in religious posts.

By the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire, similar to the Spanish Empire, found itself in serious decline and in crisis as it too lost control of its hinterlands. Rival powers successfully encroached upon its spheres of influence and its territories. Kurdistan fell into the crosshairs of expansionist states, particularly Russia.⁵⁰ Consequently, the nineteenth century in Kurdistan, as it did in Chiapas, marked a renewed struggle for hegemonic control⁵¹ and bloody conflict that left the region even more impoverished.

In the face of collapse, the Ottoman state embarked on significant institutional reforms, pushing for greater centralization and modernization in efforts to maximize revenue acquisition. In the process, the empire redefined its relationship with its peripheral Kurdish region, dramatically altering the political and social landscape.

Ottoman defeat at the hands of Russia led Sultan Mahmud to start a program of centralization in 1812. Ottoman weakness led local *derebeys* (“valley lords”) to opportunistically turn their military fiefdoms into hereditary holdings and stop the payment of taxes. They took advantage of the poor infrastructure that particularly afflicted the Kurdish areas. The quality of the roads further broke down and railways had never been put in place. Banditry also increased by the beginning of the nineteenth century, as Kurdish nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes plundered settled communities during their seasonal migrations.

⁵⁰ Kurdistan was the scene of the Russo-Turkish Wars of 1804-1813, 1828-30, 1877-78.

⁵¹ European challenges to the Ottoman state were not just military or political. European economic dominance began asserting itself, as their merchants made inroads into the empire establishing markets for the industrial revolution taking shape in the continent. Furthermore, Europe spurred a religious struggle within the empire as Protestant and Catholic missionaries brought access to new educational, business, and political possibilities for the eastern Christian communities, at the exclusion of Muslims. Their intrusion into the empire, particularly in the areas of Kurdistan, led to considerable communal instability as schism afflicted the churches and fear afflicted the neighboring Kurdish Muslims, whom the Ottoman state was quite willing to employ against the Christian communities in an effort to reassert its political authority (see Van Bruinessen 1992, McDowall 1996).

By the 1830s the Ottoman state sought to reign in the Kurdish chiefs. They had become emboldened by both Russian and Mehmet Ali's (the upstart governor of Egypt) military victories against the Ottomans. Some Kurdish princes began responding to Russia's call for forming alliances, and had come to see their autonomy by this time as an entitlement (McDowall 1996).

Ottoman moves to deal with recalcitrant Kurdish leaders led to greater suffering among the local peasant populations who, in addition to having to face brigands, now had to deal with a greater tax burden. Many peasants, as in Chiapas, began to abandon their villages and migrate. Also, similarly to the Creole elite's fear of an impending rebellion by the Chiapan Indians, an insecure and increasingly fearful Ottoman state looked to control the situation by bringing the tribes under its direct authority. This meant destroying the Kurdish emirates.⁵²

The Ottomans, because of their military weakness in the hinterlands, used the assistance of European powers, particularly Britain and Germany. These countries provided on-the-ground intelligence, counsel, and forged alliances with interested parties in destroying the emirs. The Europeans had become angered by the violence unleashed by the opportunistic emirs against the Christian communities. They also worried over Russian influence upsetting the balance of power in the region by aiding the Persian Qajar regime reshape the fuzzy borders with the Ottomans. By 1850, the emirate system had come to an end.

⁵² The first emirate to rise up against the Ottomans was Mir Rashid Mohammed who used the Egyptian rebellion in 1832 as an opportunity to expand his territories. After the Ottomans defeated him, largely through deception, only Botan remained as a formidable emirate under the rule of Bedirhan. Although Bedirhan rose up in response to Ottoman centralization policies (Özoğlu 2004), he allowed himself to be induced by the Ottomans to move against the Nestorian Christians. The Ottoman state knew that the Europeans would in turn demand that the empire rein in the emirates (O'Shea 2004, McDowall 1996). Bedirhan, who had put up a "valiant defence" (O'Shea 2004:85) of his fortress, fell in 1845. Sherifhan of Bitlis was defeated five years later.

The Ottomans, increasingly mindful of the threat posed by the Kurdish region the loyalty of its people, issued an imperial order (*irade*) in 1846. The order introduced new administrative provisions. It created a jurisdictional entity known as the Kurdistan province (*eyaleti*).⁵³ The order was about resituating the military center of the Ottoman administration in Kurdistan (Özoğlu 2004). Ottoman officials recommended to the Sultan that Ahlat, located on Lake Van, become the base of operations for the Anatolian army. “Ahlat provides better transportation and logistical support and is located in the heart of Kurdistan, where the Kurds can be better controlled with the iron fist (*pence-i satvat*), which proves to be necessary” (quoted in Özoğlu 2004:61). The recommendations go on to acknowledge the “special status” of the region, the lawlessness, and the need to bring it under the rule of a single strongman who would have the latitude to wield power in the name of the empire.

Lawlessness did arrive with the destruction of the emirate system. The emirs had been responsible for a regional balance of powers, as they represented and ruled over federations of Kurdish tribes. Without them, inter-tribal conflicts arose throughout the region. While the Ottomans could assert authority around towns, in the countryside they could only take punitive military action, which was not sufficient for controlling the tribes (McDowall 1996).

Previously, the emirs and lower supra-tribal chiefs, who collected tribute from the peasant population, mediated between the claims of rival tribes over the villages. The destruction of the emirates created a power vacuum, which brought a new, non-tribally aligned social group to the fore. These were the sheiks. Kurdish sheiks were

⁵³The significance of the order, according to Özoğlu (2004:60-61), was that for the first time Kurdistan became a province with borders to be administered, though the name “Kurdistan” was removed from imperial orders starting in 1867.

overwhelmingly Sufis, products of informal religious lodges concentrated in the rural tribal areas of eastern Anatolia.⁵⁴ As Barkey (1994) points out, Sufi lodges served as a haven for many peasants of Anatolia who were displaced and alienated by violence at the hands of rapacious brigands and corrupt government officials, particularly since the sixteenth century. They had, thus, according to Barkey, served as a kind of cushion to disruptive political forces, serving to deflect large peasant uprisings in the face of these conditions. Sheikly influence only grew in the middle of the nineteenth century. By filling the political void left by the destruction of the emirs and lower level Kurdish chiefs, the sheiks “were, due to the respect accorded to them, able to mediate in disputes and exercise political authority” (O’Shea 2004:87).

Political authority quickly translated into military authority. The Naksibendi sheik Ubaydallah led a formidable military force when appointed by the Ottoman state as commander of the Kurdish forces during the Russo-Ottoman wars of 1877-78. Using religious zeal to unite Kurds, he quickly became an uncontrollable military entity for the Ottomans.⁵⁵ Ubaydallah’s power and authority led him to seek to establish an independent monarchy under his rule as a secular and spiritual leader of the Kurds.

The emergence of the Sufi sheiks was also closely associated with changes in the Ottoman land codes. The empire, similar to the “vacant lands” movement in Chiapas in the early-to-mid nineteenth century, sought to liberalize and “modernize” land ownership throughout its territory. The Ottoman state, in desperate need to improve its collection of

⁵⁴Sufi dervish orders (*tarikats*) have been particularly strong among Kurdish and Turkomen tribes, particularly since the fifteenth century with the rise of Safavids, which was founded by Sheik Safi al Din. This order was behind the founding of the *Kızılbaş*. In the seventeenth century another Sufi order known as the Naksibendi became influential in Diyarbakir. This movement has played an important social and political role in Turkish society in the twentieth century and continues to do so today. See Van Bruinessen (1992) and McDowall (1996) for an in-depth discussion of the Sufi orders in Kurdistan.

⁵⁵ Mehmet Firat Kiliç (2006) provides a relatively in-depth analysis of the Sheik Ubaydallah movement.

revenue, instituted the Land Code of 1858, as devised by a new cadre of liberal-minded reformist bureaucrats. The code was an attempt to institute a form of private property, and it dramatically altered the socio-economic structure of the Anatolian countryside, particularly in Kurdistan.

The idea of the program was to transfer possession of a certain category of land, even though technically owned by the Sultan, to individuals. The government's land registry office redistributed the land in return for a small fee. The new possessor was to be given a title deed explaining his rights and obligations.

Possession, however, gave way to full ownership. The code allowed for inheritance, and lands were transferable and saleable with the permission of the registry office. Soon possessors began to ignore the obligations that came with the deed. In effect, the code, because of the corruption of the registry officials, another example of the weakness of the Ottoman state in implementing policy, benefited only a small elite while hurting the mass of the villagers who were excluded (Van Bruinessen 1992).

The ones who knew how to deal with government officials were the ones who benefited. These were the *agas*, traditional tribal leaders who now became landowners, sheikhs, and certain government officials and merchants from the towns. Whole villages became the private property of local notables. The traditional rights to the lands that villagers worked or used for pasture were erased. In some cases, indebted village notables gave up the land to merchants from the towns and left. One British surveyor wrote of the conditions in Iraq in 1930 (*sic*), "The personal touch and interdependence that existed between even the most arbitrary local chieftain and the village cultivators appears not infrequently then to have been replaced by more mechanical efforts to exploit the land

from outside and by obstruction to such efforts from within” (quoted in van Bruinessen 1992:183). The tribal heads or *agas* too tried to exploit more from the villagers, and “usually” (Van Bruinessen 1992) left, becoming absentee landlords.

Van Bruinessen summarizes the social-structural consequences of the land code:

- (1) The communal quality of tribal life began to breakdown, leading to greater individualization.
- (2) Greater social stratification occurred within the tribe; *agas* became landlords, in some cases with extreme amounts of dominion over their followers, and tribesman became sharecroppers.
- (3) A new social group, the urban-based landlord, emerged.
- (4) New networks and forms of cooperation formed between the urban-based landlord and the village tribal *aga*, each representing the interests of the other in their respective locations.
- (5) Many cultivators lost their traditional rights to the land and were forced into sharecropping or forced to work as hired laborers. With the mechanization of agriculture in the 1950s, many sharecroppers were in fact evicted with state support, a direct consequence, as Van Bruinessen notes, of the land code of a century earlier. What is also significant is that these changes in the plains and valleys of Kurdistan, particularly in the areas of Diyarbakir province, sharpened the social differences between these areas and the more rugged, mountainous areas where small-landholding non-tribal peasants lived.

The land code was also a boon for the sheiks that now established an economic base for their growing political and symbolic power. At this point it would be useful to explain the political role played by sheikhs as members of the *ayan* or local notable class. The Ottoman constitutional and parliamentary experiment of 1876 gave local notables throughout the empire new opportunities for participation in its administration. Notables

acted as “urban intermediaries” for the government and the local population, and consisted of three main categories. These were the ulema (religious officials), local military leaders, and the local elite whose power came from their traditional ties with the local population (Özoğlu 2001). This, as Özoğlu points out, is somewhat of a general description, and one that applies more accurately for the Arab *ayan*. Özoğlu goes on to describe the distinctive nature of the Kurdish *ayan*.

In Kurdistan, local military leaders did not exist as a separate category. The local religious leaders (the sheiks) and the non-religious leaders (*agas* and tribal chieftains) were the leaders of the Kurdish tribesman who constituted the military force. The governor (*vali*) largely depended on the tribesman for military operations. Furthermore, the Kurdish ulema were made up almost entirely of Sufis, not of formally trained clergy. Lastly, the Kurdish notables, as intermediaries, were not of an urban background, but rural in “their origins and power bases” (Özoğlu 2001:385), and the Sufi sheiks appealed most directly to the non-tribal Kurdish peasants (McDowall 1996).

The sheiks were able to unite several of the tribes and *agas* against the increasingly secularizing reforms of the Ottoman state and subsequently the Turkish nationalist Kemalist movement. In order to break the power of the sheiks, Kemal in 1924 outlawed the religious schools and the Sufi orders or brotherhoods (*tarikats*).

By all accounts, the Ubaydallah movement, erupting in 1880 in the region of Hakkari, was a response to the devastation, poverty, and famine brought about by the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78, the increasing foreign interventions in the region in favor of the Christian communities, and the increasing perception of Ottoman and Persian Qajar corruption and weakness in the face of these interventions. The Ottomans had

failed to achieve law and order in areas beyond the immediate environs of the towns. Despite this, it was trying to impose unduly high taxes to pay for their wars. Certainly, Ottoman weakness in the face of Russian invasion helped Ubaydallah achieve the military strength he needed, as the Ottomans armed him and appointed him commander of Kurdish tribal forces in order to resist the invaders. For me, Ubaydallah is a figure similar to Pedro Díaz Cuzcat in that they were both a new type of religious charismatic leader. Both were given official prominence in the ruling political order, but ended up seeking to achieve greater autonomy for their communities, which had been suffering at the hands of ruling parties throughout the nineteenth century.

Ubaydallah's insurrection traversed the Ottoman and Qajar borders. Although unsuccessful militarily in Hakkari, he crossed the border into Iran in October of 1880 and was soon driven back into Ottoman lands. The Ottomans, pressured by both the British and the Russians, and realizing they could not control Ubaydallah captured him in 1882 and exiled him to Istanbul. He later died in the Hijaz, after he escaped from exile in 1883.

In 1891 Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1908) created the Hamidiye Cavalry in the Kurdish region, which, I would argue, was a direct response to both the Ubaydallah movement and increased European intervention in eastern Anatolia.⁵⁶ Abdul Hamid was a figure similar to President Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910) of Mexico. Both came to power following a series of liberal reforms but sought to centralize state dominance, eschewing liberalism as an attempt to stem the tide of political instability. The Hamidiye consisted of tribal irregular troops from select Sunni Kurdish tribes whose purpose was to impose central authority on eastern Anatolia, block British and Russian inroads in the area, and

⁵⁶Kiliç (2006:108) plays it safe; in place of saying the creation of the Hamidiye was the direct consequence of the Ubaydallah uprising, he states, "Without proper consideration of Sheikh Ubaydullah's movement, Hamidian regiments cannot be evaluated."

build social and political solidarity through the message of pan-Islam. The Ottoman state encouraged the Hamidiye to keep the Armenian communities in check through fear and intimidation, and to collect taxes from their villages.

Although there were regiments of mixed tribes, often the men of a single regiment came from the same tribe and the commanding officer was their tribal chief. The Hamidiye also conferred important advantages to selected tribes. Chiefs, their sons, and their officers were sent to a special military school in Istanbul and worked with Ottoman military leaders. They were given uniforms. Their tribesmen were exempt of the unpopular Ottoman conscription efforts in the area, and some of the villages associated with the Hamidiye were given the opportunity to establish schools, a unique quality in the poverty-stricken Kurdish provinces.

The problem, however, was that Hamidiye tribes used their position to settle scores with other tribes (see McDowall 1996). The Sunni Jibran tribe, which consisted of four Hamidiye regiments, attacked the lands of the Alevi Khurmak tribe. The Ottoman state did nothing to stop these attacks against the Alevis who were historically viewed as the distrusted Kızılbaş. There were also disfavored Sunni tribes who faced losing their lands by force at the hands of the Hamidiye. When the Ottomans could not pay their salaries, the Hamidiye had the green light to collect taxes from Armenian villages.

The Ottoman regional administration could not reign in the Hamidiye. Sultan Abdul Hamid placed them exclusively under the control of his brother-in-law Zakki Pasha, the military commander (*mushir*) of the Fourth Army in Erzurum. The local governor (*vali*) had no sway over Zakki Pasha who answered only to the sultan. The local Ottoman administration felt only contempt for the Hamidiye who were increasingly the

cause of violence and instability in the region. Within the inter-tribal conflicts, the peasantry, both Muslim and Christian, again suffered the most. Among the Christians, the Ottoman military commanders pushed the Hamidiye to specifically target the Armenians. Massacres ensued in 1892 and 1894. These conditions of violence led to a disastrous drop in agricultural production in 1897-98. When Russian threats of invasion waned by 1900, Zakki Pasha sought to reign in the Hamidiye tribes, but had only limited success.

The violence had also caused the destruction of institutions. Schools and libraries, for instance, had emerged with the arrival of Ottoman rule in the sixteenth century. These institutions, based in the mosques and Sufi lodges (*tekiyes*) aided in the development of Kurdish literature (O'Shea 2004). In 1597, Bitlis had 500 religious scholars and students. But by 1890 when the population of the town had increased to 38,886, the number of mosques and Sufi lodges had decreased to fifteen for the former and four for the latter (see O'Shea 2004).

The nineteenth century in both Chiapas and Kurdistan became centers of conflict and exploitation as the central states in both cases transformed and reformed. In the midst of the violence, traditional forms of social organization—the communal *ejido* of the Indians in Chiapas, and the semi-nomadic tribal structure of the Kurds—of the indigenous populations were destroyed in some areas as the domination of large landlords either both emerged and strengthened in the name of “modernization,” sharpening political and social differences between lowland areas (central Chiapas, and the Diyarbakir valley) and the more mountainous or distant areas that still maintained small peasant landownership structures and tribal identities. Conflict and violence were also spurred on by foreign power intervention. Constant conflict, lawlessness, and violence, in

association with political changes signified the rise of new indigenous elites who led movements to stake out autonomy. These movements were destroyed, but that did not bring in place greater state hegemony in the regions. Strong political divisions continued along with lawlessness and disorder. This environment was not conducive to developing trust networks between state and society.

3.7 Conclusion

State power in Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan did not evolve the same way as it did in Europe. The Spanish and Ottoman Empires in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not begin the process of moving away from mediated power structure towards unmediated forms. These empires did not sweep away feudal patterns of control, nor did they wipe away the resistance of local elites. Instead of achieving a monopoly of violence, these states outsourced it to allied local elites. These local elites, with autonomous access to resources and the capacity to wield coercion, competed increasingly amongst themselves for power in Chiapas and Kurdistan as the Spanish crown and the Ottoman sultanate faced greater challenges from European powers from the seventeenth century onwards. Spain and the Ottoman state tried to manage these problems through new alliances with local agents, who certainly pursued their own corrupt personal ambitions as well.

Managing the situation is the essential feature behind buffer-zone politics. The power structures of both Chiapas and Kurdistan could not be more closely incorporated into the central state structures, although the nineteenth did bring new and closer alliances between transforming central states and certain regional elites (lowlander liberals in

Chiapas, and the Hamidiye regiments in Kurdistan). Chiapas and Kurdistan had powerful legacies as acknowledged zones of war since the sixteenth century. As a result, central states and their agents were aware of their precarious hold on power in these regions and came to see the native populations as threats. Clearly, this is why the Creole elites of Chiapas ruthlessly attacked the indigenous communities seeking greater autonomy in 1868-69 during the so-called “Caste War,” and that is why the Ottoman state destroyed the emirates, suppressed Ubaydallah, and created the Hamidiye.

But what is the significance of negotiated-intensive approaches to state building for Chiapas and Kurdistan in the long run? Such a situation signified peripheralization. New and broader institutional networks between state and society failed to develop as the nineteenth century came to a close, and the infrastructure continued to deteriorate as a result of ongoing conflict. These factors set the stage for the resistance these regions put up against their respective national states in the nationalizing period of the twentieth century, which will be covered in the following chapter.

One broad and difficult challenge to occur during the nationalizing period, starting in earnest in the 1930s for both Mexico and Turkey, was the need to build an unmediated governing and administrative structure while *simultaneously* managing and overseeing the development of mass politics on a national scale (Waldner 1999). Mass popular incorporation in Europe had occurred more gradually as the administrative structures of state had taken shape. By the time mass political incorporation had occurred in Europe by the late nineteenth century, “European unmediated states had already acquired many of the characteristic features, such as legal-rational administrative structures, extensive administrative and surveillance capacity, and efficient mechanisms

for domestic resource extraction, characteristics that persisted into the era of mass politics” (Waldner 1999:26).

Such institutions were lacking in Chiapas and Kurdistan when Mexico and Turkey entered the twentieth century, and these regions continued to be zones of war. But Mexico and Turkey had their nationalist revolutions early in the twentieth century. They did look to begin centralizing their power in Chiapas and Kurdistan. That goal soon fell into complications. What needs to be explored is the relationship between Mexican and Turkish attempts to more fully incorporate their troublesome regions of Chiapas and Kurdistan, and the emergence of the counter-hegemonic EZLN and PKK.

Chapter IV

The Failure to Build Trust Networks: The Legacy of Negotiated-intensive State Building in the Twentieth Century

The indigenous movement of the so-called Caste War and the Sheik Ubaydallah rebellion were not counter-hegemonic in the sense of rivaling or challenging a central state power. Rather, they reflected a struggle to carve out an autonomous space to shield themselves from the wars by rival regional factions and powers. These historical events helped to illustrate that by the start of the twentieth century, both Mexico and the disintegrating Ottoman state continued to depend on informal peripheral arrangements with certain local elites of Chiapas and Kurdistan. No formal bureaucracy as yet developed that could incorporate local structures into the larger central state. In other words, both states continued to evince low levels of state capacity and high levels of state autonomy.

Following the nationalist revolutions of both countries (Mexico: 1910-1921, and Turkey: 1908-1923), centralization was the goal. The central state would have to augment its capacity by formally incorporating local structures into some kind of professional bureaucracy and national political-party system. Those countries that have been most successful at establishing state sovereignty have done so by augmenting their state capacities without sacrificing high levels of state autonomy. Mexico and Turkey were unable to maintain state autonomy in the struggle to increase state capacity in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan, signifying that personalized, informal networks of power continued to reign. State power continued to remain mediated. Both countries failed to live up to Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy; parochial, regional interests were allowed to capture national institutions.

It is my contention that the history of negotiated-intensive style of state building has left powerful structural legacies, ultimately compromising the centralization process that Mexico and Turkey struggled to carry out with respect to Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan in the twentieth century following their revolutions. More precisely, I argue in the present chapter that both countries, in trying to build more formal linkages incorporating local structures with the national system, had to bargain off considerable amounts of state autonomy in order to increase their state capacities by some measure. The compromise ultimately limited the establishment of national sovereignty in their respective regions. Furthermore, diminished state autonomy meant that the central states would now be the targets of any potential counter-hegemonic uprisings.

The parceling out of state autonomy signified that under the national system of the twentieth century, the central Mexican and Turkish states have continued to employ elements of the negotiated-intensive exercise of state power in Chiapas and Kurdistan, namely the reliance and co-optation of narrow, self-interested local elites to carry out the central states' bidding in the regions. Such reliance diminished their state autonomy, precluding the possibility of developing trust networks—formalized, broadened, and reciprocating system of state-society relations that could have brought long-term social and political stability to those regions. The failure to do so signified that conditions favorable for the emergence of armed movements such as the EZLN and the PKK would come into place as social and political changes accelerated after 1950. The social, political, and economic crises of the 1970s and early 1980s brought these legacies to light¹ with perhaps the most significant consequences in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan.

¹ Consider the similarities in the descriptions of what the economic crisis at the beginning of the 1980s revealed about the Mexican and Turkish polities at the time. For Mexico: “In such times, even thin

The legacy of the negotiated-intensive pre-revolutionary era was evident in that Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan continued to be the stage where violent sub-regional rivalries between local actors played out as the emerging national states struggled to incorporate these areas. In other words, the revolutionary Mexican and Turkish states, because of their history with these regions, still lacked the capacity to impose a monopoly of violence. Indeed, the historian Robert Olson (1989:12-15) argues that the Hamidiye regiments formed by Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1891 served as a “fulcrum” of autonomous Kurdish power that by the 1920s came to constitute the basis for a counter-hegemonic force against the emerging Turkish state. Olson writes that the Hamidiye “contributed to feelings of solidarity among Sunni Kurds and offered leadership opportunities to many young Kurdish men. The Hamidiye also provided many Kurds with knowledge of military technology and equipment and the capabilities to use it.”

In terms of Chiapas, regional elites with autonomous levels of coercion were already engaged in low-level warfare, specifically the conservatives of the central highlands challenging the pro-Porfirian commercial elites of the lowlands and coastal Chiapas since about 1903. As Robert Wasserstrom (1989[1983]:188) notes, the arrival of Francisco Madero’s revolutionary army into Chiapas in 1911 was seen as “an army of occupation.” As a result, Aubry (2005:135) notes the counter-hegemonic intentions of the

legitimacy wore thinner; the state’s reliance on coercion and clientelism could be seen through the fabric, and it was not a pretty sight. The state could no longer pose as a populist paterfamilias, governing for the collective good for the nation; nor, necessarily, could it be seen as the sage and farsighted facilitator of capital accumulation. Particular, personal, and patrimonial interests appeared to predominate... State autonomy, it seemed, served neither national nor class interests but rather those of a narrow parasitic elite: Old Corruption, Mexican-style” (Knight 2001:198).

For Turkey: “The private sector growing up in the shadow of the state (and thanks to the public sector) certainly had interest in gaining freedom of economic action, more access to credit, fiscal facilities, the freedom of cross-border traffic, but why should it have to undertake open political action when it can try to obtain all this at less cost to itself by remaining entrenched in bureaucratic or palace politics where its informal networks of family, regional, and factional solidarity is at the heart of the game” (Leca quoted in Özbudun 1996:150).

Nowhere were the above conditions more pronounced than in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan.

emboldened and coercive-capable elites of Chiapas: ‘the Chiapan “Revolution” had a precise objective: a well-orchestrated challenge to the Mexican Revolution.’

The Mexican and Turkish revolutions, led by a small elite,² sought to modernize and centralize the political organization of their respective countries. The revolutionary forces, however, were a long way from obtaining a monopoly of coercive power in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan by the 1920s, as local elites in both regions had mobilized to challenge the establishment of state power. Their ability to resist their corresponding central states was aided by the crises these states faced from both internal and external threats. Consequently, the revolutionary elites who came to power in Mexico and Turkey struggled to weaken or destroy local “counter-revolutionary” actors in both regions in the first half of the twentieth century.

It is important to note that a state’s capacity to apply direct rule is a question of degree. As Waldner (1999:19) writes, “states range along a continuum, and no states occupy the extremes of fully mediated or fully unmediated rule.” As indicated in Chapter III, the process towards unmediated rule necessitates the construction of new institutions of state, specifically bureaucratic structures that produce broad linkages between the populace and state agencies paving the way for recognized, accepted, and durable patterns of reciprocity between local communities and the state. I will show in this chapter that both the Mexican state in Chiapas and the Turkish state in its Kurdish areas

² See Ellen Kay Trimberger (1978) for an in-depth analysis for Turkey’s “revolution from above” led by a military bureaucratic elite. Although the Mexican Revolution is normally considered a “social revolution” emerging from among the rural masses, Alan Knight (1986:497) argues, “The Key difference was the post-1915 ‘revolution from above’ was built on the ruins of a prior (1910-1915) ‘revolution from below’, which the Carrancistas were ultimately able to contain and co-opt; they were, in a sense, successful, populist equivalents of the Chinese Koumintag.”

the building of such institutions were at best incomplete³ and ultimately allowed the political and social space for both the EZLN and the PKK to not only to emerge in the 1970s, but to grow by the 1980s.

We have seen that the mediated, negotiated-intensive style of state building of the Spanish and the Ottoman imperial structure depended on compromising and strategizing with local elites, in order to maintain and expand their influence. Often, both parties tested the provisions of their agreements when circumstances provided opportunities for one side to gain advantage over the other. Weak states had to control and manage conflicts among the regional dominant classes. In turn, the central Spanish (and Mexican state of the nineteenth century) and Ottoman states were never seen as significant providers of public goods (low state capacity)—although at times seen as the ultimate arbiters of social justice in the region due to high levels of state autonomy—by the local population.

The path of mediated to unmediated state structures has historically evinced two patterns: “the construction of institutional networks supplanting notables and linking the state to social classes and groups and the expansion of the state’s provision of public goods, particularly as the state assumes responsibility for establishing infrastructure, regulating the economy, and managing ties to the global economy” (Waldner 1999:23), to the degree that unmediated states essentially come to be viewed as the provider of public

³The journalist Jonathan Randal (1997:290) reports a conversation he had with Kamran Inan, a member of parliament, about Ankara civil servants working on development projects in the Kurdish areas. Inan had asked the group of bureaucrats how many of them had been to Western Europe. The majority raised their hands. “When I asked how many had visited the east and southeast, only one hand went up,” he said in disgust. “They didn’t know their own country. They devised their plans here in Ankara, and no wonder development projects failed,” he said.’

goods. Tilly (2004) called those institutional networks linking the state to societal groups for a reciprocal exchange of services and goods “trust networks.”

As Tilly notes, trust networks develop in society as means for providing predictability and security for risk-laden long-term ventures such as marriage, business relations in the form of trade and investments, education. Tilly comments (2004:16), “such networks move from evasion of governmental detection and control to partial reliance on government agents and presumption that such agents will meet their long-term commitments.” In fact, such a presumption among the people lead them to form organizations that bargain with state agents, and, in turn, “start investing family money in government securities, yield their sons to military service, seek government assistance in enforcement of religious obligations, organize mutual aid through publicly recognized labor unions, and so on” (16). Such a situation, according to Tilly, in which the public feels it has a stake in the state as reflected in the nature of its organizations, illustrates the dynamics of a high-capacity, democratic state. Trust networks that proliferate and exist outside the purview of the state are symptoms of a weak and less-than-democratic state: “When people segregate their trust networks entirely from public politics, they have strong incentives to evade responsibility for governmental performance and to seek short-term private advantage at the expense of long-term public good” (16). In such a situation, only a small group of people, who constitute a particular interest or status group, can access governmental resources for their own benefit, compromising state autonomy, and serving as agents of the state in their locality.

Furthermore, the success or failure in the construction of state-linked trust networks, determines the nature of political activism within states. The lack of

established trust networks between state and society leads to “undemocratic” or violent forms of political contention.

Fundamentally, according to Weberian principles, the development of broad and successful trust networks is dependent on the building of a professionalized and well-insulated, or autonomous state bureaucracy—what Peter Evans (1995; see also Woolcock 1998) calls “embedded autonomy.” For Evans (1995:50) the term signifies combining “Weberian bureaucratic insulation with intense connection to the surrounding social structure”—a type of connection often called “synergy” in the literature—ultimately leading to a “coherent and cohesive state.” The post-revolutionary states of Mexico and Turkey have not been able to establish synergy in their respective regions of Chiapas and Kurdistan, and instead relied more heavily on narrow networks of political patronage with certain local elites, and in other cases leaving whole rural communities outside the purview of the state. This chapter will show that as a result of the failures of building effective trust networks, both Mexico and Turkey failed to preclude the emergence of “non-democratic” or violent forms of political contention.

Why did Mexico and Turkey fail to build effective trust networks between the state and the local communities in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan? As Peter Evans (1995) argues, state-society synergy can only emerge once the monopoly of violence by the state is established. In these respective regions, although incipient counter-hegemonic movements were crushed, the monopoly of violence was never fully achieved. The revolutionary Mexican and Turkish states were aware of their precarious position vis-à-vis their diverse and diffuse rural populations, particularly in Chiapas and Turkish

Kurdistan, and opted for “nonmobilizational” (Nawawi 1981-1982) populist⁴ policies that sought to obtain ideological legitimacy—through the imposition of a new national identity (see also Knight 1991)—rather than to disruptively intervene in the lives of their rural populations for the larger project of industrial modernization. Both states espoused peasantist ideologies in the statist-populist era beginning in the 1930s, declaring that this social group, the overwhelming majority of both societies, was the true representative of the nation.

Consequently, the non-mobilizational character of the post-revolutionary Mexican and Turkish states failed to erect, as this chapter will show, durable trust-networks between the states and their ostensibly rural populations in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan. Because of the non-mobilizational nature of Mexican and Turkish populism, both states reverted to extending, beginning in the 1940s and particularly after the 1950s, as both countries pushed for greater centralization, patronage networks to certain local interests/elites. These elites were then incorporated into the central political party systems and bureaucracies, while the Mexican and Turkish states failed to establish any or much of a presence in other parts of Chiapas and Turkish-Kurdistan.

The larger problem, however, was that due to the reliance on these narrow patronage networks—compromising their state autonomy in order to obtain an increase in

⁴ Muhammed Nawawi (1981-82:5) defines populism as having to do with “the focus on the people [which] implies the idealization of the non-elite majority as the depository of all the basic energies of the society. Furthermore, in view of the organic unity of the people, the elite cannot represent or be identified with any particular segments or interests within it. It follows, therefore, that there can be no intra-elite conflict or competition. This idealization of the people, together with the denial of the intra-elite conflict and competition, necessarily precludes the possibility of true mobilization.”

Considering the high levels of elite conflict in the revolutionary struggle for the establishment of the Mexican and Turkish republics, particularly in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan, it makes sense that the populism espoused by both countries in the 1930s would seek a new basis for national solidarity, downplaying the rivalries among the elites. Due to the precarious situation of both states in terms of establishing a monopoly of violence, national solidarity was sought on the basis of a new ideological legitimacy rather than a mobilizational process of building trust networks.

some measure in their state capacities—Mexico and Turkey never won over the loyalty and faith of the larger populations and consequently became targets for their discontent. As populations grew and began to shift, and as politically active groups began to organize in the rural areas, new networks formed outside the purview of the states, forming a basis for resistance starting in the 1970s and eventually congealing in the form of the EZLN and the PKK when their nervous states and their local allies sought to impose greater control on these populations.

4.1 National Revolutions and Counter-Hegemonic Movements in Chiapas and Ottoman-Turkish Kurdistan

Chiapas and Ottoman Kurdistan entered the twentieth century highly factionalized and unstable. State crises afflicting the Mexican state (namely the struggle of state power that came with the Mexican Revolution) and the Ottoman state (namely the struggle for power that came as a combination of the Turkish Revolution and WWI) plunged both regions into chaos and war by the second decade of the twentieth century. Under these conditions, whatever alliances the central states had with certain local elites began to breakdown and shift, and some of these local elites, always opportunistic, began to agitate for autonomy or alterations in the structure of power. This section will deal with how the emerging revolutionary Mexican and Turkish states dealt with the counter-hegemonic forces in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan and their impact on the politics of the both regions in the twentieth century.

4.1.1 Mexico

The elites of San Cristóbal and the central highlands, “the clerical, conservative, and imperial bastion of Chiapas” (Benjamin 2004:187), having suffered at the hands of policies emanating from Tuxtla, began an intrigue for power once again in 1903. As noted in the previous chapter, the conservatives, led by the Bishop Francisco Orozco y Jiménez, provoked “considerable” (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:188) blood-letting by inciting Indians against the government in Tuxtla. Conservative networks of Ladinos and Indians effectively formed an alternative regional government.

As the interim governor of Tuxtla, Dr. Policarpo Rueda, arrived in San Cristóbal on May 15, 1911 to negotiate a truce, Bishop Orozco y Jiménez ordered one of the conservative commanders, Jacinto Pérez Chixtot, to begin mobilizing the Indians of Chamula. The conservatives also sent Pajarito, another commander, to attack lowland forces with 1,000 men⁵ (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]) from Chamula. The conservatives raised the banner of Francisco Madero against the pro-Porfirian lowlanders.

The counter-revolutionary Victoriano Huerta toppled Madero in February of 1913. The politicians enthusiastically gave their support to the new regime along for his general A.Z. Palafox. But at the start of 1914, small rebellions popped up opposing Huerta in various parts of the state led by Madero supporters unaffiliated with the 1911 San Cristóbal uprising, including the landowner Luis Espinosa of the central valley who broke ranks with the Tuxtla government. These challenges did not pose much of a threat

⁵ Thomas Benjamin (2004:187) argues that the participation of the Tzotzil Indians of Chamula did not constitute a “popular” rebellion, despite the numbers of them involved: 2,000 or 3,000 (as opposed to the 1,000 figure provided by Wasserstrom). The Chamulans had agreed to participate, according to Benjamin, due to promises of reform on the part of the highland conservatives, and due to the possibility that the Chamulans could renew claims from previous disputes with neighboring communities. With the uprising, Indian agitation and attacks against estates in the highlands went on the rise, and the conservatives of the region, notes Benjamin, feared another “caste war.” This fear, argues Benjamin, ultimately contributed to the less-than-favorable peace treaty the conservatives accepted with the Tuxtla government.

for Palafox, but they did unleash a wave of banditry, violence, and labor unrest, resulting in a significant destruction of property (Benjamin 2004).

Venustiano Carranza, after his constitutionalist regime toppled Huerta in the summer of 1914, was eager to assert his control over the whole of the country. He came down heavy on Chiapas. He sent his general, Jesús Agustín Castro, to impose control.⁶ Instead of negotiating with the large landowners of the central valley of the state, Castro promulgated the Labor Law which abolished indentured servitude, set a minimum salary, and gave rural laborers rights such as health services, vacations, and free education. Federal troops forcefully released hacienda laborers of their services, sending them back to their villages. Federal troops also assassinated landlords, burned plots of land, stole livestock and harvested crops, invaded churches, destroyed altars, and took objects of value. These acts, in turn, alienated the landlords and ranchers of the central valley who also began to organize a resistance movement known as the *mapaches* under Tiburcio Fernández Ruiz.

The landlords of the southeast region and cattle ranchers and producers of cotton of the central valley together signed the act of Canguí, declaring, “In the face of vandalism that the Chiapan family has to face from the armed forces sent by the Carranza government to tread upon Chiapan soil with the only purpose being to trample upon our political institutions, we have taken the decision to rise up in arms in defense of our society” (quoted in Wasserstrom 1989[1983]:190). Francisco Villa and Emiliano

⁶ Wasserstrom (1989[1983]:187) notes that Carranza distrusted Chiapan troops serving the regime. One of General Castro’s first actions was to relieve these troops of their service. The relieved officers soon joined the ranks of the rebels.

The heavy-handedness of Castro is also reflected in his words: “Cowardly Chiapanecans; while the north is steeped in struggle, here there is peace. I will show you to feel the effects of the revolution, no matter the cost” (quoted in Benjamin 2004:187).

Zapata's split from the Carranza movement certainly aided in the rebels' defense of Chiapan society (Benjamin 2004). The rebel armies joined forces—including hacienda owners of Comitán, who now quickly organized their own "revolutionary" army as part of the mapaches—and took over control of the region and the state's international border for the next five years. Alberto Pineda, another landowner of the Ocosingo area, leader of the Pinedista movement, joined the mapaches with his Las Casas Brigade, harassing federal troops from Ocosingo to Palenque starting at the end of 1916.

Benjamin (2004) argues that this uprising did not represent a struggle of the landed class against the imposition of a national revolution since the wealthier landlords from the lowlands of Tuxtla and the coastal areas not only refrained from participating in the rebellion, they cooperated with and joined the Carranza government. The leaders of the mapache rebellion consisted of relatively poorer landlords and ranch owners in the Central Valley, while the Pinedistas were representatives of the poor landlords where commercial agriculture was little developed on the frontiers of the state: the highlands and the areas just west of the Lacandón Forest.

The rebels, although badly equipped, managed to expel federal troops from San Cristóbal. Starting in January of 1918, Fernández Ruiz launched an offensive putting his troops under the command of Pineda. Pineda moved beyond his base of operations in Ocosingo and captured Simojovel, Palenque, Salto de Agua, Sivacá, Copainalá, and Pichucalco. In return, Carranza turned to one of his "most respected" (Benjamin 2004:191) generals, Salvador Alvarado, who now declared "total war" on the region. He appropriated the strategy of "re-concentrating populations" in "strategic villages," labeling certain zones as rebel areas (see map 4) with the mapaches centered in the

lowland valleys with its focal point in La Concordia but extending just south and west of Tuxtla, and Pineda's forces centered in Ocosingo and extending north and west towards San Cristóbal. Total war destroyed the local economy, bringing with it hunger and poverty. In turn, the government's generals and officers then bought up the livestock and property of the re-concentrated captive populations at very low prices. By 1919, a mapache sympathizer described the impact of the war on Chiapas thus: "Chiapas was on the point of disappearance: her cities in ruin, populations destroyed, lands burned" (quoted in Benjamin 2004:192).

Due to internal rivalries, however, the rebels could not defeat the forces of General Castro. Rebel commanders such as Pineda and Tiburcio Fernández Ruiz suffered a series of defeats, and when Álvaro Obregón came to the presidency, they had agreed to a kind of truce with federal authorities in 1920 (Wasserstrom 1989[1983]). Fernández Ruiz declared himself the leader of the Obregón movement. The mapaches, therefore, became "incorporated" (Benjamin 2004:192) into the federal army after Carranza's forces dissolved following his assassination at the hands of Obregón. Fernández Ruiz occupied Tuxtla and was named governor of Chiapas.⁷ Ruiz successfully defended the city of Tuxtla from Pineda and his followers when the latter rebelled again in 1924. Pineda attacked Tuxtla and nearly captured it. But his defeat at the hands of the once rebel Fernández Ruiz destroyed whatever hope the elites of the highlands ever had of dominating the state or making San Cristóbal its capital once again (Benjamin 2004).

Lowland elites, ranchers, and the coffee plantation owners maintained their favored status with the central government. Many former mapache rebel leaders

⁷ There was a short period when the mapaches lost control of the state to Carlos Vidal in 1925, leader of the Socialist Party of Soconusco, founded in 1921. Vidal, however, was assassinated in 1927 and the state government then returned to mapache control (Harvey 1998).

opportunistically became members of the ruling National Revolutionary Party (PNR, later to become the PRI). In fact, the former mapache captain, Francisco Grajales, became elected governor of Chiapas in 1948.

4.1.2 *The Ottoman Empire*

The Ottoman Empire once again faced disorder after the 1909 overthrow of Sultan Abdul Hamid by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), an organization consisting of a cadre of young military officers and bureaucratic officials. Their struggle against members of the old order led to an increasingly authoritarian system of rule emphasizing Turkishness, causing considerable unrest in various parts of the empire, particularly in Kurdistan. The Hamidiye were co-opted as the “Tribal Regiments” (*aşiret alayları*) under the CUP, and with them the Ottoman state managed to maintain even a firmer grip on the towns of Kurdistan but not the countryside, which was riddled with inter-communal rivalries, lawless tribes, banditry, and periodic Russian interventions. Kurdistan turned into a full theater of war in 1914.

The CUP was consumed by fear of losing control of the empire. They urgently felt the need to modernize the state in order to pre-empt of what they saw as its near imminent dissolution. Modernizing signified adapting European ways of implementing and maintaining central authority and effective provincial administration.⁸ Although the

⁸ McDowall (1996:87) interestingly describes the situation in Kurdistan in 1900 as similar to “today,” which again lends weight to the argument of a strong structural historical legacy that has favored the emergence of the PKK. He writes, “Similar tensions and characteristics are evident when comparing the region in 1900 and today: the use of a widespread network of spies and informers; the physical abuse of detainees, extrajudicial (as well as judicial) killings, and internal exile for both individuals and groups of people who present a risk to state security; attempts openly to publish criticisms or proposals for reform; the arrest and exile of those who speak openly; the formation of clandestine groups dedicated to change the system or even overthrow it by extra-legal means; the resort to open warfare and finally, as happened

CUP came in with liberal pretensions of reforming the empire, their overwhelming concern for maintaining control turned into cynical ploys for augmenting central power, such as by renaming the Hamidiye. “The CUP realized that the feudal powers of the Kurdish chiefs were a good check to other developments, and that the greed of such leaders could be exploited effectively, so all social reforms were reversed” (O’Shea 2004:101).

Among the Kurdish elite there were two distinct groups. The first were the more urban sophisticates of both secularists and religious reformers (such as Said Nursi among the latter) who had active roles within the administration of the empire. They had been brought to Istanbul to be trained to in the universities and academies to serve in the military and the bureaucracy. The first group reacted to the increasing Turkishness of the CUP⁹ and their ideologies of reform, nationalism, and modernization amidst the increasing instability of the empire, by coalescing around new political groups seeking a different direction for Kurdistan (see Özoğlu 2004 for a more in-depth analysis). Kurdish societies were formed in the provinces of the east in the urban centers of Diyarbakir, Bitlis, Mosul, and Baghdad.

The second group consisted of the tribal, village, and religious elite in Kurdistan who, fearful of the dramatic political changes afflicting the empire, clung to the traditional order of sultan/caliph as leader of the Muslim community and defender of the existing tribal structure. Local sheiks and *agas* figured predominantly among this group,

increasingly in the last half of the nineteenth century, self-imposed exile in order to escape the authorities and yet to be active politically.”

⁹ Two notable Kurds played prominent roles in the development of a Turkish nationalist ideology. One was the journalist and administrator, Suleyman Nazif, who served as the governor *Vali* of Mosul in 1914 and then in Baghdad in 1915. The other is Ziya Gökalp who is considered to be the father of Turkish nationalism. Gökalp was born in Diyarbakir in 1876 as the son of a low-level city bureaucrat, growing up with an Ottomanist feeling of “disdain” for the largely rural nature of Kurdish culture (McDowall 1996:92).

and it was they that began to feel the most threatened as the CUP cracked down on political opposition starting in 1909.¹⁰ As noted in the previous chapter, the sheiks led a myriad of Sufi lodges (*tarikats*) and had considerable social and political prestige. They had established themselves as a quasi-landholding class through marriage with tribal chieftains.

The sheiks petitioned the CUP government to adopt administrative norms in the Kurdish areas that in turn would guarantee their positions as local elites (see Olson 1989:17). They requested the administration of law according to the Sharia, the appointment of religious judges (*qadi*) and lawyers of canon law (*müfti*) from adherents of the Shafii school of law from which the Kurdish sheiks hailed, as opposed to the Hanafi school of law to which the Ottoman state adhered. Taxes were also to be collected according the Sharia. Other requests were made reflecting the distinctive aspects of the region, including the seeking of Kurdish-speaking administrators and Kurdish as the language of government and instruction. The antagonistic response of the CUP to these requests¹¹ led to constant uprisings between 1908 until the end of WWI in 1918 from among the sheiks and their allies among some of the *agas* and tribal chiefs who had benefited under Sultan Abdul Hamid's reign, (Olson 1989).

¹⁰ An example of how the political reforms of the CUP was threatening the village *aga* class is illustrated by a declaration made by Ziya Gökalp in 1909: "Once the village agha has got a member of the administration in his hands through his capacity in the art of surreptitiously gaining the ear of the powerful, he immediately tries to save the men of conscription age in his village from the army, the criminals from the courts, those who owe taxes and labour commutation dues from the tax collector. He lives like an independent prince in the confines of his villages through these services. He collects from crimes, marriages, 'marriages by capture' and receives various other benefits. The villagers, who in their opinion are now under obligation, pay the sums for animal taxes under the exact amount to the agha, and in order to not permit any other tax farmer in the village except the agha, become secretive, commit false accusations, give false evidence, and do all else that is necessary" (quoted in McDowall 1996:95).

¹¹ The CUP pushed to impose a new secular constitution that sought to return Armenian lands usurped by Kurdish Hamidian chiefs in 1895, and to retroactively collect taxes on these same chiefs during the following years of free reign. These actions led to almost immediate uprisings by Kurdish tribal chiefs such as Ibrahim Pasha, chief of the Milli confederation of tribes, and another group of old Hamidian leaders led by Husayn Pasha Haydaranlı (see McDowall 1996).

WWI was devastating in Kurdistan as the major powers exploited local conflicts among the Kurds themselves and between the Kurds and their Christian neighbors. Kurds were enticed with promises of profit and opportunities to settle scores, much like the Chamulan Indians in the struggle between the highland conservative elites and large lowland landowners. The start of the war in the Middle East can be traced to a preemptive strike by the Ottomans on the Russian forces occupying Urmiah. The Russians routed the Ottoman 400 tribal cavalry, and further expelled all the Kurds and Sunnis from the plain of Urmiah. The Ottomans in turn expelled the Armenians from this border area, “and thus began the dreadful cycle of deportations and massacres that were to punctuate the war in Kurdistan” (O’Shea 2004:94).

The Russians and the British both made overtures to the Kurdish populations and fighting forces. In 1915 15,000 Kurdish cavalry deserted from the Ottoman Third Army, and nearly all the Kurds deserted during the Battle of Dilman. Much of the desertions took place in the border regions when Kurdish chiefs propelled their followers to do so. Nevertheless, the Russians, because of their heavy-handed treatment of the Kurds and clear favoritism for the Christian minorities, failed to win the support of the Kurds.

The war devastated the region known as Kurdistan to a much greater degree than the conflicts in Chiapas during the same period. The war officially ended on Oct. 30, 1918 with the Treaty of Mudros. But during that time between one and one and half million Armenians fell victim, and about half a million Kurdish civilians and another 300,000 soldiers from Ottoman Anatolia were killed. If the numbers from Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Russia are added for the Kurds then about a million of them in total perished (O’Shea 2004:102). Famine and disease were rampant by 1917. Further, the Ottoman and

Russian armies carried out scorched-earth policies destroying granaries and the infrastructure in their wake. Consequently, economic chaos ensued, dramatically increasing prices for basic foodstuffs. In turn, this led greater social disparities in the region as the larger landowners could escape to faraway cities, and as tribal chiefs and better-off merchants who had money could obtain the necessary resources for survival.

The tribal chiefs emerged further privileged as they were adept at switching loyalties, as they had been doing for centuries, to the Russians, Ottomans, British, and Germans seeking to increase their influence. Thus, “[t]he power of the ruling elites was strengthened, as was the system of tribal representation. The intertribal rivalry, encouraged by outside agents, was to compound Kurdistan’s social and leadership problems at a crucial time” (O’Shea 2004:104). It is from among these conditions that the Sheik Said rebellion emerged in 1925, and the tribal rivalries were probably why the young Turkish state was able to repress it.

Robert Olson (1989:27) indicates that the Hamidiye chiefs, such as Halid Beg Cibran who participated with the Turkish nationalist CUP against the Russians and the Armenians in Anatolia, realized only as the war was coming to a close that growing Turkish hegemony was now going to target them. Consequently, by 1919 Halid Beg and others like him used their governmental authority invested in the towns of Dersim (today’s Tunceli province) to rally the tribes in order to confront the emerging Turkish nationalist government.¹² In 1920 the Kurdish chiefs formally organized a propaganda campaign, particularly among the Sunni sheiks and religious teachers (*hocas*) against the

¹² The end of WWI signified the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This was “made formal” (Balta 2007:75) with the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres on August 10, 1920. Articles 62-64 set the protocol under the auspices of the League of Nations by which areas designated as Kurdish under the treaty would receive independence. The treaty, no doubt, served as a rallying call for Kurdish leaders who opposed Turkish hegemony

state now under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. Halid Beg toured and began organizing the tribes of Varto, Bulanık, Malazgirt, Hınıs, Karlıova, Solhan, Çapakçür, the areas from which the Sheik Said rebellion emerged.

Meanwhile, the Koçgiri rebellion¹³ (named after the tribe that was principally behind it) occurred in 1920 in Dersim, led by the well-connected son of a wealthy *aga*, Nuri Dersimi. Dersimi returned to the region after the war, having lived in Istanbul and associating with Ottoman Kurdish officials such as Sayyid Abdul Kadir who had been planning autonomy for the region (see Olson 1989). The Ottoman government in Istanbul was now led by Ferit Pasha serving under the occupation of the British who had promised autonomy for the Kurdish areas with the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres in August of 1920.

Kemal, having heard of potential rebellion in Dersim, attempted to counteract it by buying off and appointing important Kurds to positions of authority. The participants of the Koçgiri movement gave the Kemal government an ultimatum on 25 November 1920, stating that if an independent Kurdistan were not established in the *vilayets* of Diyarbakir, Elaziz, Van, and Bitlis, as called for the Treaty of Sèvres, then they would rise up militarily. Ankara said they agreed to the demands while militarizing the region in an apparent ruse to buy time (Olson 1989). It worked; tribal leaders wanted to delay any armed revolt until the spring of 1921. In the meantime, Kemal continued appointing Kurds to high positions in parliament in order to co-opt Kurdish leadership.

¹³It should be noted here that West Dersim was not included in the Kurdish designated area under the Treaty of Sèvres. Certainly, this could have been a factor in the urgency that the local elites felt in the face of Turkish hegemony.

The Kurdish leadership of the rebellion had also calculated that the Turks, engaged in heavy fighting with the Greeks in Western Anatolia (following their invasion of 1919), could not fight them at the same time (Olson 1989). The Kurds appointed to Ankara provided no encouragement for the rebellion, and the Turkish offensive succeeded in destroying the uprising in the spring of 1921, as some tribes withdrew their support from the rebels while others never enlisted.

With the Koçgiri rebellion, it seems, the Kurds wanted to “take advantage” of the precariousness of the young Kemalist government, which had just formed the year prior in 1920; the Greeks had yet to be driven out of Anatolia (Olson 1989:33). But the tribal nature of Kurdish society continued to plague any move towards unity, as did religious and sectarian divisions. The Alevi Kurds of Dersim failed to win over the Sunni Kurds. The Kemalists exploited these divisions through the official job appointments and with land offers as vast amounts of Armenian lands and properties were available for the giving. At the same time, Dersim did not really house the formidable Hamidiye and tribal regiments that had the military experience to challenge the Turkish state. The Hamidiye were largely located further east/southeast (Olson 1989).

Olson (1989) also notes that the Kurds learned some lessons that they were to apply in the later Sheik Said rebellion of 1925. Tribal chiefs were unreliable leaders as they were easily co-opted, while the sheiks were more steadfast in their zeal against the Kemalists. The growing influence of the sheiks in opposing Ankara led to less cooperation between Alevis and Sunnis. The 1925 rebellion was a Sunni Affair, whereas the Koçgiri rebellion had both groups participating, although it was perhaps in the majority Alevi. Further divisions came out in the Sheik Said rebellion. Zaza speakers

were the principal participants of the 1925 revolt, whereas the Koçgiri event included both Zaza and Kurmancı speakers. During the Sheik Said uprising, the Alevis either remained neutral or assisted the Turkish government as did some Sunni tribes (Kazemi 1991, Olson 1989). As in Chiapas, rebel leaders in Turkish Kurdistan switched sides opportunistically as well.

Other factors complicating the Kurdish resistance had to do with the personal loyalty many Kurdish *agas* felt for Mustafa Kemal (Olson 1989). He had led the Sixteenth Army Corps in Diyarbakir in 1916, and under his leadership Russian forces retreated while an Armenian state failed to materialize in eastern Anatolia. Foreigners and non-Muslims were defeated. Kemal included several important Kurds in the national congresses of Erzurum and Sivas in 1919. Olson notes the irony that the consolidation of Turkish nationalism, militarily and politically, occurred in the areas where Kurdish leaders wanted to establish their state. But Kurdish tribal chiefs and large landholders had much to gain through their support of Kemal, namely the legal rights to the lands confiscated from Armenians,¹⁴ and Kemal played on these ties through correspondences with Kurdish chiefs and sheiks in the immediate post-WWI period.

Nevertheless, there was a cadre of Kurdish military officers in the Ottoman army that formed an underground political organization known as Ciwata Azadi Kurd (Society for Kurdish Freedom), later to be known as Ciwata Kweseriya Kurd (Society for Kurdish Independence), and called Azadi for short. Its formation is among the factors that led up to the Sheik Said rebellion (Olson 1989, McDowall 1996). The year of its founding is unclear, dated either to 1921 or 1923, and thus its connections to the Koçgiri rebellion are

¹⁴ The Treaty of Sèvres also promised independence to the Armenians of the eastern Anatolia, which worried the Kurdish leaders who benefited from their expulsion.

uncertain. What is clear is that the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 did away with the articles of independence for Anatolian minorities called for in the Treaty of Sèvres, bringing greater urgency for Kurdish leaders to act.

According to British intelligence reports from interviews with Kurdish officers (Olson 1989:42), Halid Beg Cibran, the former Hamidiye commander, had founded Azadi in Erzurum in 1921 and established branches in several cities and towns, including Diyarbakir, Siirt, Istanbul, Dersim, Bitlis, Kars, Hınıs, Muş, Erzincan, Malazgirt, Harput, Van. The leaders of the different branches consisted of tribal chiefs, who were officers in the Turkish military, and some were former Hamidiye commanders.

The tribes who followed the organization were those active in Bitlis, Van, Mardin, and the Şirnak areas. Since August of 1924, Azadi had been promoting tribal unrest in those regions. Consequently, Turkish troops came to be seen as an occupying force and units smaller than 200 men were vulnerable to tribal attack (Olson 1989). The Azadi movement was clearly responding to the Turkish project of building hegemony as declared to British officials. These were Azadi's grievances: Turkish policies of transplanting the Kurdish population of the eastern provinces to western Anatolia, and moving in a Turkish-speaking refugee (from the war) populations; the abolishment of the caliphate; the prohibition of Kurdish in public institutions; the closing down of Sufi lodges and religious brotherhoods; oppressive patterns of tax extraction; the exclusion of Kurds in upper-level government offices; lack of returns from heavy taxation; the corruption of local officials engaged in military raids on villages and the stealing of their livestock and goods; and the exploitation of the natural resources of the region.

Azadi arranged its first congress in 1924. Sheik Said, a leading Nakşibendi sheik and a relative of Halid Beg Cibran by marriage, stood out at the meeting. Said had been invited because of significant influence over the Zaza-speaking Sunni tribes located to the northeast of Diyarbakir. He convinced the former Hamidiye tribal commanders, who were hesitant, of the necessity of carrying out the rebellion (Olson 1989).¹⁵

The Sheik Said rebellion, which lasted from February to May of 1925, however, did mark “the first major internal challenge to the new Turkey” (Balta 2007:78), mustering a large force of fighting men of around 20,000 men (Kazemi 1991). The revolt followed the Turkish Grand National Assembly, 29 October 1924, which to the draft of a new constitution and the declaring of the Turkish Republic. With the constitution came the forbidding of Kurdish in public places and Law 1505 legalizing the expropriation of the land of large landholders in Kurdistan to be given to Turkish speakers.

The participants of the rebellion reflect the social divisions in the region. According to Farhad Kazemi (1991:109), the main constituents of the revolt were landless peasants who followed their local chieftains into the struggle. Kazemi essentially supports Olson’s (1989:89) thesis, who writes, “The scattered small villages and the lack of powerful landowners allowed for a modicum of participation among the peasant landowners and local authorities.” Olson adds that the non-tribal Kurds in the plains of

¹⁵ The congress coincided with some key events. There was a Turkish-Kurdish congress that took place in August of 1924, designed to improve the conditions of Turkish rule in the Kurdish regions. There were promises of restoring Sharia courts, establishing a distinct administrative apparatus more suitable for the Kurdish population, and improve investment in the area. Another was the mutiny in Beyt Şebab of 500 Kurdish officers and soldiers that took place in September of 1924. The mutiny was designed to preempt Turkish consolidation of military strength used to suppress Kurdish political activity and challenge British designs on Mosul (Olson 1989). Members of Azadi did not have much faith in the Turkish state’s promises. The Azadi movement was also confident of weakening Turkish control over the eastern provinces. They argued that fifty percent of the Turkish Seventh Army in Diyarbakir was Kurdish and would switch loyalties. They also believed a small but significant contingent of Turkish officers sympathized with Kurdish interests. Nevertheless, the Beyt Şebab mutiny did not have much of an impact, as the Kurdish tribes did not join the fight.

Diyarbakir valley did not participate, as their landowners, hoping to consolidate the recognition of their land titles by the government, prevented them from getting involved. Those places that had large landowners willing to take on the state participated in the rebellion, which is different from the more contemporary PKK case in which more smallholding types of villages participated, similar to the EZLN uprising. I discuss village typologies and participation in more detail in Chapter V.

The urban notables and the lower and working-class Kurds of Diyarbakir and other large towns also failed to join the fight. The cities tended to be more tightly controlled by the Turkish government, as they usually contained military garrisons, and the movement focused on mobilizing among tribal Sunni elements, which, as mentioned, had alienated the Alevis. Tribal feuding had also prevented the movement from growing further. In the end, Sheik Said was captured on April 25, tried, and executed along with fifty of his cohorts by hanging on June 29, 1925.

The early revolts of Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan served as watershed moments for the history of both states in their troubled regions because they determined much of the rest of the century in terms of how these regions were to be administered. Indian oral history in Chiapas states, “It [the Mexican Revolution] came but did not stick” (*Sí entró pero no pegó*) (Aubry 2005:156). According to Aubry, the revolution did not stick because it was something “exported” and “imposed.” The only “vernacular” of Chiapas was “counter-revolution,” and opportunism led local chiefs to take on “false labels” such as “local leaders of the revolution.” Mapache leaders, for instance, allied with the ruling party of the central state, and then gradually took over the state apparatus in Chiapas as governors until the end of the century, “simulating” adherence to the principles of the

revolution, and only managing the situation in order to preempt the outbreak of any anti-state violence. In other words, they employed “non-mobilizational” policies with the indigenous communities.

Clearly, the Turkish Revolution was something foreign and imposed on the population of Kurdistan. If anything, the strong resistance from local elites in the form of the Sheik Said rebellion revealed the kind of challenge the central state faced in assimilating the region politically and socially. As a result of the rebellion, Turkey pursued a geo-politically “non-interventionist” policy towards the larger Middle East, seeking instead to focus on managing conditions internally, as reflected in the Turkish motto of “peace at home and peace abroad” (Olson 1989:151).

To be sure, internal control in Turkish Kurdistan proved difficult. Followers of Sheik Said maintained pockets of resistance in the years following, and another significant rebellion took place in 1930 under the leadership of Ihsan Nuri Pasha, known as the Revolt of Ağrı. Another Dersim rebellion among the Kurdish Alevi erupted in 1936 lasting until 1938. This revolt was also a reaction to greater Turkish control of the area in the form of roads, bridges, police stations, and government buildings in major villages.

Nevertheless, Turkey and Mexico were successful in maintaining their respective southeastern regions largely quiet until the 1970s. Soon after quelling the early counter-hegemonic movements, both the Mexican and Turkish states targeted for sanction those local elites who they perceived would be continuing threats. This lasted to about 1950. After the mid-century mark, both states began extending new patronage networks to certain local elites at the expense of constructing responsive bureaucracies and broadened

trust networks to the ever-growing rural populations of Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan. The next section will discuss how the Mexican and Turkish states dealt with the local elites in their troublesome regions until about 1950, illustrating the limitations of state power in both cases, which ultimately laid the groundwork for the troublesome 1970s, 80s, and 90s.

4.2 The Frontiers of State Power: 1930-1950

Both post-revolutionary Mexico and Turkey were agrarian states led by positivist-oriented military elites who sought to modernize their societies and economies. In doing so, they instituted new means by which these states would integrate into the global market system. The arrival of the Great Depression, for instance, posed a crisis for countries dependent on the export of agricultural products with prices for these items declining drastically. Trade in general declined, and for countries like Mexico and Turkey, which depended on the importation of basic goods, the reproduction of their populations was threatened. Both states, consequently, initiated a program of industrialization known as import-substitution industrialization (ISI) in order to lessen the economic burden of the Depression. This entailed creating a market for products that had traditionally been for export and by domestically manufacturing products that had traditionally been imported.

Since the industrial bourgeoisie was relatively small (Mexico) or non-existent (Turkey), the states instituting ISI took on the role of establishing industry, a project known as statism. The state sought to direct private enterprise by entering into the production of goods. The state raised the needed capital by introducing direct and indirect

forms of taxation, imposing tariffs on foreign trade, and by controlling the price mechanism.

Zülküf Aydin (1986) highlights the problems that statism posed for regional development. With states directing investment in targeted areas promising the greatest returns, and having to depend largely on their own masses for capital accumulation, investment was selective and unequal in terms of regions. As a result, the state sought to invest in areas that were relatively more developed in terms of infrastructure, which furthered unequal economic growth. By deliberately neglecting certain areas in the process of creating a national market, writes Aydin (1986:28), “The bourgeois state...ensures the flow of labour and capital from the underdeveloped to the developed regions. Underdeveloped region are not only a source of labour for the developed regions; they are also a very important market for the products of the developed regions.”

Therefore, states like Mexico and Turkey during the depression had to depend on large rural areas of subsistence peasant farming because this would aid in the reproduction of the labor force via “a non-capitalist mode of production without [industrialists or the state] taking on the burden of reproduction costs of the labourers” (Aydin 1986:29). This explanation also serves to partially explain the “non-mobilizational” character of statist policies.

While a useful framework for analyzing regional underdevelopment among Third-World states, Aydin admits it is a bit too general. Ultimately, regional and local political factors have to be considered as well. Regions that have proved resistant to centralization may be targeted by the state for the extraction of capital and labor surplus while receiving little or no investment, since the state cannot ensure control of such funds

and interests in the area. In the Chiapan case, when the mapaches gave their loyalty to Alvaro Obregón and aided in defeating the counter-hegemonic Pineda movement, they won the right to maintain a certain amount of autonomy from Mexico City, and largely exempted their region from state interventionist agrarian reform,¹⁶ ensuring that the large-estate (*latifundio*) system would continue to exist (Harvey 1998, Collier & Lowery Quaratiello 1999[1994]) in the coastal and lowland regions of the state. It is in this context we will begin the analysis of the period in post-revolutionary Mexican Chiapas.

4.2.1 Mexico

Mexican land reform policies targeted those areas of Chiapas that resisted the revolutionary state, namely the central highlands and eastern and southeastern Chiapas abutting the Lacandón forest. Politically, land reform became a way of weakening the power of the local landlords (*finqueros*¹⁷), the elites on the margins of the state that led the counter-hegemonic movement during the revolutionary period, and in capturing the support of the rural indigenous population by structurally and ideologically transforming them from “wretched serfs into *ejidal* peasants with dignity” (Aubry 2005:155).

The post-revolutionary state saw the Indians as being unorganized and lacking a “sentiment of citizenship” (see Knight 1990). President Lázaro Cárdenas¹⁸ led the first Interamerican Indian Congress in 1941 through which Mexico created the National

¹⁶ Gemma van der Haar (2001:51) writes, “In the Soconusco, for example, ejidos were created in the periphery of the coffee plantations, whereas the core, including the machinery, remained in private hands, thereby ensuring continued control over commercialization.”

¹⁷ The historian Thomas Benjamin notes that “in Chiapas finquero and government are the same thing” (quoted in Aubry 2005:142).

¹⁸ Aubry (2005:154) recounts the story of President Cárdenas’ first arrival in Chiapas. After having made his way to Acapulco from Mexico City, he arrived in Tuxtla in one of the few cars to be found in Chiapas. Cárdenas then tried to make the difficult climb to San Cristóbal via mule-drawn wagons. His wagon got stuck in a village in the municipality of Zinacantán. He ended up riding into San Cristóbal on horseback, and later to Comitán. This, according to Aubry, was an experience he had not had in any other state of the country.

Indianist Institute (INI) whose purpose was to educate and develop rural indigenous populations into “modern” citizens. It turned instead to a narrow self-interested patron-client network from which certain local Indian officials in the central highland communities benefited from.

Cárdenas’ government, beginning in 1934, redistributed thousands of hectares¹⁹ of land (twenty hectares per male head of household) from what were considered “stagnant commercial estates” (Collier & Lowery Quaratiello 1999[1994]:32) towards *ejidos* (peasant communities formed through official land grants) in Chiapas. It proved to be an effective way of winning the support and loyalty of indigenous peasants. It also helped further domestic industrialization; ensuring a cheap domestic food supply for the sustenance of an urban worker population served as a subsidy for the nation’s industrialists.

Marco Estrada (2007) gives a fairly detailed account of land redistribution of *finquero* lands in the Tojolabal areas of Las Margaritas from 1934-1950. To be sure, the process was at times plagued with inefficiencies and corruption. The redistribution of land was incomplete at times, reflecting again the limits of state power to carry out its programs coherently. There were also cases of *finquero* violence against peasant solicitors of land reform. This violence, in part, notes Estrada (2007:80), was possible because some of the Indian laborers preferred the material, physical, and emotional security that the patrimonial hacienda system provided, leading to tensions with those who preferred to break free of the system. It should be noted that the *finqueros* at times also got away with turning over the worst lands for cultivation. These factors played a

¹⁹ 300,000 hectares of land were redistributed under President Cárdenas (Aubry 2005:154).

role in the worsening conditions of indigenous peasants as they continued to subsidize Mexican industrialization well into the 1940s.

This worsening notably began at the end of the 1930s with the start of WWII, which brought with it an increasing global demand for foodstuffs and other basic goods. The state reverted to supporting the interests of large-scale commercial agriculture in the central and western parts of Chiapas, and land redistribution, consequently, came to an “abrupt halt” (Collier & Lowery Quaratiello 1999[1994]:34). Despite increasing demand, the state continued to artificially hold the price of food low. The peasant population, therefore, continued to subsidize Mexican economic growth. Many peasants, as a result, having exhausted the cultivation capacity of their lands, sought part-time work in the commercial agriculture sector, which found itself growing once again in the central highlands, the central lowland valleys, and Soconusco.

The indigenous peasants of eastern Chiapas found themselves in increasingly precarious conditions. This precariousness was compounded by the state’s absence and inability to respond to the conditions within the *ejidal* peasant communities. Estrada (2007:86) poignantly notes that despite the “strict” legal implementation “implied” in the land reform code, the code only served as a normative reference point that at best could “orient” the actions of the people of the community and serve as a guide for resolving conflicts. There were no outside agents or institutions that could help in regulating the lives of the peasant communities. The state was not developing trust networks with these communities that could provide reciprocal services during difficult times of change. Thus, plagued with low productivity in *ejidal* lands, population growth, and an unconcerned state increasingly ignoring the land redistribution process, many indigenous

peasants began looking to emigrate and colonize areas within the Lacandón forest by the end of the 1940s, a frontier region where the state lacked any presence.²⁰

President Manuel Ávila Camacho (1939-1945) had pushed for the program of colonizing virgin lands such as the Lacandón with his “March to the Sea” program. His successor, President Miguel Alemán (1946-1952), pushed it further which, according to De Vos (2002:29), hid a new a political agenda intended to replace agrarian reform. Alemán halted the redistribution of hacienda lands and invited peasants to colonize the uninhabited national territories of the forest. But the simultaneous and unpublicized purpose was to open these lands to private enterprise. Thus, large landed estates began to develop in the area of the Lacandón alongside small property owners and *ejidal* lands. These conditions became the basis for conflict and tension beginning in the 1970s and 80s due to demographic changes and imbalanced state policies towards the region.

As eastern Chiapas remained outside the purview of the central state, the National Revolutionary Party (PNR), the ruling party under Cárdenas, however, did succeed in establishing an institutional presence in the central highlands and in reorganizing the local power structure. It did so by replacing the traditional indigenous leadership in these communities with a younger generation of Indian leaders incorporated into the ruling political party of the state, and by making state agencies such as the *Instituto Nacional Indeginista* (INI) a more significant presence in the lives of the Indians. The Tzotzil and Tzeltal Indian population of the highlands constituted a third of the population of the

²⁰ What is also evident in Estrada’s (2007:86) analysis is how *ejidal* lands were in effect broken down into small-holding forms of private property. His collective interview with the people of Buena Vista Pachán *ejidal* community indicates that while the land was slated for communal sharing with enough land amounting to 20 hectares for each family, the founders claimed the land on a first-come-first-serve basis. Thus some staked claim to a larger parcel than others, signifying inequalities in terms of privately operated smallholdings.

state, as well the majority of the migratory labor used for the production of exportable agricultural goods (Rus 2004).

The man selected by the PNR for this venture was Erasto Urbina, a Ladino who was from the highlands and who spoke both Tzotzil and Tzeltal perfectly. For gubernatorial elections in 1936, Urbina organized bilingual Ladino gunmen of the region and went to visit the various communities of the highlands and intimidated them, using both his federal credentials and the reputation of the men with him, into voting²¹ for the PNR gubernatorial candidate. His group of armed men, carrying official state titles, directed vote counting. Urbina was appointed Director of the Department for Indian Protection (DPI), and became the official representative of the highland communities (Rus 2004).

Urbina replaced all the municipal secretaries with his armed gang. He then went about eliminating the old ruling elite among the Indian communities, those that had a history of collaborating with the local Ladino authorities. Urbina considered them to be “compromised” (Rus 2004:259) and a threat to his own authority. The ruling Indian elite of Chamula, for instance, had supported the conservative Ladinos in their fight against the state during the revolutionary period. From 1936 to 1937, Urbina looked for young bilingual men among the Indians and appointed them as scribes of their communities. Urbina won the loyalty of the indigenous communities by being responsive to their requests, and by forcefully expropriating the lands of the *finqueros* through the help of

²¹ Municipal secretaries presented the votes of the Indian communities they represented in blocks, and the most powerful political faction in the region determined the voting (Rus 2004).

his armed gang of men who were now working as official agents of the DPI. The expropriated lands were transferred directly to the Indians.

Urbina also organized a union for migrant Indian laborers, the STI (the Union of Indian Workers), which actively recruited from among the different municipalities, including San Cristóbal. The union grew to a membership of 25,000 by the end of 1937. The efforts of the STI improved the conditions of the coffee cultivators markedly working on the large plantations. Simultaneously, however, the union now policed Indian villages, hunting down those who tried to evade or flee from work. It meted out punishment and rounded up others for labor. The government now controlled the flow of workers to the large coffee producers. Through Urbino's young scribes, who managed the STI, the state now controlled the labor pool and the large landowners who depended on them (Rus 2004). The young scribes now served as the clients of the state²² and defacto representatives for the highland Indian communities when the state declared that it would only deal with bilingual municipal presidents starting on January 1, 1939.

By 1940, the Indian communities of the central highlands now found themselves tied to the state under the rubric of combating exploitation. The young scribes found powers that diverged from the role played by the traditional authority of the elders. The scribes became union officials, agricultural committee heads of their townships, local leaders of the ruling PNR, and representatives of the regional committee of the National

²² This did not come without resistance. According to Jan Rus (2004:261), the Chamulans did begin putting up a challenge, but the mysterious murder of the opposition leader led to a compromise between the DPI and the municipality of Chamula in the form of two municipal presidents, a community elder who only spoke the Indian language (the traditional model), and a young bilingual scribe who was to be the assistant. But it was the latter who in effect represented the municipality or community as the municipal president when dealing with the state. This compromise with Chamula was to serve as a "model" for the rest of the highlands.

Confederation of Peasants (CNC) (Rus 2004). Although the state was successful in altering the power structures of most of the highlands, certain parts, such as Chenalhó did resist working for Urbina and the organizations tied to the PNR. This is significant historically, because a few communities in the upper highlands did join the EZLN movement, reflecting to some degree, again, the limits of Mexican state building in Chiapas during this pivotal period.

Land reform in the highlands also came to a halt after 1940. The STI turned into a structure designed to solely facilitate the flow of laborers from the highlands to the large plantations of the lowlands, rather than one that also militated for the rights of indigenous workers (Rus 2004). Still, during elections, the scribes made sure that the communities voted for the PNR, which became the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 1940.

By 1944, however, the PRI took on a significantly more conservative bent towards the Indians, becoming “openly hostile” (Rus 2004:263) towards them in 1946 when Alberto Rojas, a former *finquero* whose lands were expropriated by Urbina, became head of the DPI. Rojas disassembled the STI, and by the end of 1946 he withdrew the subsidies from the schools setup in indigenous communities in the highlands, cutting the salaries of the native teachers that staffed them. In addition to Rojas, the first conservative municipal government of San Cristóbal imposed new customs duties and taxes on Indians carrying goods to the market in that city or passing through on their way to another (Rus 2004).

The conservative Ladinos, in their zeal to tighten their economic and political control of highland villages, unleashed a war²³ in 1949 on the Indian communities in a struggle to monopolize the sale and production of alcohol within those communities. Effectively, the new conservative direction of the state government and the PRI towards the indigenous communities extensively weakened whatever trust networks that were developing between the Ladino state, both local and federal, and the Indian villages. Land reform came to an abrupt halt. Agencies such as the STI founded on protecting the rights of native laborers were disassembled. Schools established to “Hispanify” or culturally assimilate Indians were defunded. A war to control an important commodity within the native communities erupted.

Yet, as Rus (2004:264-266) argues, the Indian communities did not turn away from supporting the PRI or from participating in government organizations such as the CNC and the DPI. Instead, the Indian communities turned more strongly towards their former scribe officials to defend them and mount an opposition to detrimental governmental policies.²⁴ The former scribes consolidated their authority over the communities by convincing them that Ladino attempts to control the alcohol trade was about threats to their religious autonomy. The former scribes consolidated their power and established themselves as the protectors of tradition.

The state could not stop Indian control of the production and distribution of alcohol. The state ended up compromising with the new Indian leadership. They were

²³ Known as the *Posht* (a locally manufactured spirit) war.

²⁴ Rus (2004:265) gives an account of collaborated action between the scribes of Chamula, Zinacantán, San Andrés, Mitontic, and Chenalhó who challenged the customs duties and transit tax of 1946. They blocked the roads leading to San Cristóbal and boycotted the market of that city. After a rough confrontation with the police of San Cristóbal, the Indian activists were able to get the new taxes suspended.

brought into the structures of state power as members of the central political party system. The local Indian leadership was also given a monopoly of control over local programs and decision-making. Thus, the state conceded some of its autonomy in order to ensure some degree of control and presence in the central highlands. The state also turned over greater influence to the landlords it once tried to weaken (through land reform) in eastern Chiapas. The landlords once again began to dominate local politics. The state thus failed to develop unmediated rule in the highlands and in eastern Chiapas at the frontiers of the Lacandón Forest.

4.2.2 Turkey: 1930-1950

The events of the 1925 Sheik Said rebellion created a sense of great fear and urgency for the Turkish ruling elite of the central state—what McDowall (1996:200) called “an almost genocidal state of mind in Ankara.” The Turkish state now was committed to wholly remake Turkish Kurdistan socially and politically—to do away with “the remnants of feudalism” (British officials cited in McDowall 1996:196). As a result, the military razed whole villages, killing their inhabitants in some cases, and deported sheiks, *agas*, and their families to western Anatolia. All Sufi lodges were outlawed. Alevis, who had supported the government, also found their institutions repressed.

By 1928, the Turkish state showed some moderation in its stance towards the population, perhaps because of concerns over its international image. Ankara appointed Ibrahim Tali as governor-general over the eastern provinces. He instituted a partial amnesty and allowed many of the non-sheik and non-*aga* members of the population who were deported to return and resettle. The Grand National Assembly in the same year

introduced a Law of Amnesty for all of Turkish Kurdistan and this allowed for rebel leaders to return, including Sheik Said's two brothers and two sons.

Tali pushed for some investment in order to develop the region. A road-building program was initiated, though this had more military significance than economic. He also proposed land reform in the redistribution of the estates of the large tribal *agas*. A law passed in June of 1929 calling for land redistribution. But its implementation was "very patchy" (McDowall 1996:201), again pointing to the limitations of state capacity in terms of the execution and coherence of state policy. Perhaps, land reform was not all that necessary as the destruction that WWI inflicted on the populations of the countryside meant that there were plenty of available land and villages to resettle.

The dearth of a productive state presence coincided with the infrastructural and economic void caused by the Great War. The countryside in 1930 still showed the remnants of destroyed villages. The Christian merchant classes and their economic activities centered in towns were now gone. Banks for providing business loans did not exist, and the population makeup of towns reflected the disproportionate presence of "non-productive" sectors. According to 1927 figures provided by McDowall (1996:202), there were: 46,925 soldiers (excluding troops sent to quell specific uprisings) and 1,254 magistrates in comparison to 29,241 artisans and workers, 29,677 merchants, and 23,591 members of other professions. Consequently, roads that had been constructed under Tali soon fell into disrepair, as there was no investment to maintain them.

Nevertheless, in response to Turkish centralization efforts, Kurdish intellectuals and tribal leaders living abroad formed an organization, Hoyboun, in 1927. They

established their headquarters in Aleppo of French-controlled Syria under the leadership of Ihsan Nuri, a former Ottoman officer. Nuri fomented a rebellion in 1928 in the region of Mount Ararat (Ağrı Dağ). He sent a small group of troops trained with modern weapons and tactics to join with the various restive tribes there. By 1930 there was a full-blown revolt. Nuri formed an alliance with the Jalali chief, Ibrahim Haski Talu, an *aga* who had been loyal to Kemal and assisted in the fight against Sheik Said in 1925. But Talu was also targeted as part of the deportation order against the *aga* class. He had fled to Ararat, joining up with several other chiefs. Again, the conflict was bloody leading to the destruction of many Kurdish villages and their populations, but the uprising was put down by 1930-31, and 1932 in Van province.

The Ararat rebellion had a significant impact on the Turkish administration of the Kurdish areas. The revolt showed once again the considerable difficulty of implementing any kind of direct rule. New chieftains found political clout because the Turkish state rewarded local political offices to tribal and other leaders who supported the government against the uprising. In the case of the Oramar tribal rebellion in the province of Hakkari, for instance, which started up in solidarity with the Ararat revolt, those families who were involved in the fight against the rebels still had members in parliament after the return to civilian rule in 1983 (see Yalçın-Heckmann 1991).²⁵

A system of clientalistic networks, thus, had formed that continues to the current day. Aside from power that is derived from “friendship with government officials” (Van Bruinessen 1992:192), some *agas* and sheiks use their personalized networks within

²⁵ Yalçın-Heckmann (1991:70) adds, “The father of recent member of parliament from Hakkari was even said to have had messages of personal friendship from Mustafa Kemal.”

villages and provinces, as the populations are small, to win mayoral, senate, or parliamentary seats during election time. Once in parliament, they can then use their influence on behalf of their village supporters in terms of building up the infrastructure: roads, irrigation, piped water, electricity, schools, etc. Villagers have gone to Ankara at times of trouble to solicit their member of parliament for aid.

The personalized nature of support and favor-granting, consequently, leads to “intense political struggle” during times of election. “Dormant conflicts are revived, new ones break out, traditional rivalries receive new impulses. Kurdish society seems to become more tribal in such periods. Usually it takes more than a year before the tension generated by election dissipates” (Van Bruinessen 1992:192). Because of the local political structure conflict seems to be endemic. Similar to the Chiapan highlands, the state failed to develop formalized trust networks with local communities, and instead turned to depending upon personalized and informal patron-client networks for any degree of control, ensuring more indirect rule rather than direct rule.

Mustafa Kemal and his Republican People’s Party (RPP or CHP in Turkish) in 1932, in similar fashion to Cárdenas’ National Indianist Institute, pushed for a means of organizing its vast and ethnically mixed rural population through education designed to develop a new nationalist consciousness. It was about “Turkifying” the peasant population through a nationalist and “peasantist” ideology. This was to be effected through the establishment of People’s Houses (*Halk Evleri*) where urban intellectuals, leaders of the new republic, and members of the Peasantist Divisions (*Köycülük Kolları*) would “enlighten” villagers with the aim of creating “prosperous and educated Turkish peasants” (Karaömerlioğlu 1999). Since, however, the typical village of Anatolia was

small and dispersed over considerable distances in the countryside, especially in the Kurdish east, the People's Houses or their later versions, the People's Rooms of 1939, never arrived to many of them. Further, the emphasis on Turkishness in those Kurdish villages where they did arrive only served to alienate the local population (Karaömerlioğlu 1999).

The push for rural education through the People's Houses coincided with the "draconian" (McDowall 1996:207) Resettlement Law of June 1934, which divided the country into three demographic zones: 1) areas to be inhabited by people of Turkish culture; 2) areas to which non-Turkish populations were to be moved in order to facilitate their assimilation; and 3) areas that were to be evacuated. The purpose of such divisions was clear: to help in identifying those population groups that needed assimilation through the transfer process. Such a policy arose because the central state was aware of the regional variations in its capacity to control the population (Balta 2007). The law did away with the prior recognitions of tribes, their chiefs, and sheiks, targeting them, instead, for transfer and assimilation into Turkish culture. The plan was to disperse the Kurdish-speaking to areas where they would not constitute more than 5% of the population.

Dersim fiercely resisted these measures by the Turkish state, as it had previously. In 1935, the state directed special measures against the region. It was officially designated as a province and renamed Tunceli. A military governor was appointed in 1936 and a "state of siege was declared" (McDowall 1996:208) as the army began building military roads throughout the area. A 25,000 troop military operation began in 1937. Considerable violence ensued. In August the military suffered significant casualties

as it razed villages and expelled their populations, with many fleeing into the mountains. In 1938, the government went after the rebels in the hills through aerial bombing, gas attacks, and artillery barrages. As they continued to resist more villages were destroyed. All-in-all, 40,000 Kurds died. Three thousand local notables were deported, and the remainder of the population was put under the surveillance of an elite Mountain Brigade (McDowall 1996). A visit by a Turkish journalist to the region in 1948, after the lifting of military rule, showed that the Turkish state was not providing anything in the way of services:

I went to Tunc Eli, the old Dersim. The place was desolate. Tax collectors and policemen are still the only state officials the people have ever seen. . . . There are no schools, no doctors. The people do not even know what the word ‘medicine’ means. If you speak to them of government, they translate it immediately as tax collectors and policemen. We give the people of Dersim nothing; we only take. We have no right to carry on treating them like this. (quoted in McDowall 1996:209)

The Dersim uprising was the last of what was considered the “tribal” rebellions against Turkish hegemony. Emergency rule came to a close in 1946 for Tunceli, and families that were deported were allowed to return to the province. Nevertheless, efforts to Turkify did take place in the provinces of Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Van, Hakkari, Muş, Mardin, Urfa, and Siirt, and according to certain reports, 3,000 *agas* and sheiks had been targeted for deportation to the west of the country (McDowall 1996).

But Turkification could not be successful. The state was strapped for resources, The Kurdish areas constituted a fairly large area and geographically difficult in parts. The infrastructure was poor and attempts to improve it fell into arrears by the resource-strapped state. Furthermore, the Kurdish speaking population continued to grow

according to the state's statistics, from 543,000 in 1927 to 765,000 in 1935 (McDowall 1996:210). Kurdish-Muslim brotherhoods (*tarikats*) and practices²⁶ continued to survive as well, expanding their networks throughout Turkey and heavily influencing Islamist politics in the country. Politically, the brotherhoods from among the Kurds have tended to support religiously conservative, right-wing parties, while the nationalists among them turned increasingly to the left, only adding to the social divisions in the region that were to come to a head with the emergence of the PKK.

The above factors, combined with fierce resistance from certain local chieftains, meant that the Kemalist state could not overcome its legacy of negotiated-intensive state building in the region. The state was too weak to effectively impose its sovereignty and in turn develop the trust-networks necessary for future stability. A 1924 Village Law had put forth a long list of obligatory and voluntary projects for village populations to carry out, such as building schools, whitewashing houses, the registration of births, marriages, and deaths, having regular council meetings, etc. These went largely ignored, and the state could not enforce them (Nawawi 1981-1982). Another example includes the call for land reform in the 1940s for those areas, largely in the east, that contained large landlords and landless peasants. But this too failed to be instituted.

Strategic alliances with certain local elites continued, as discussed above, for their aid against those rebelling against the state, thus continuing the patterns of indirect-rule. State ties to local landlords and village headmen (*muhtars*), usually selected from landowners with sizable holdings, further solidified in 1941. WWII was impacting the world economy by raising the global prices of wheat and grains. The Turkish state, in

²⁶ See Ibrahim Kaya's (2006) description of his Kurdish village of Metina.

order to ensure a cheap and sufficient food supply for its growing urban population resorted to coercion in order to capture grains at below-market prices (see Pamuk 1991). Peasants engaged in wide-scale evasive tactics, and were largely successful. Of the targeted 800,000 tons of wheat (25% of the crop) in 1942, sufficient for an urban population that constituted 20% of the country's population, the state only managed to capture 500,000 tons of wheat for that year at below-market prices.

Large landholders received amnesties from the state from having to sell their cereals at below-market prices. Şevket Pamuk (1991) explains that this amnesty had to do with the ease with which larger cultivators could bring their surplus grains to market, as opposed to small peasants who could not without the state obligating them to do so. I have argued (Kucukozer 2007:15), however, that the state's exemption for larger landowners had also to do with other factors. Government agents depended, as Pamuk notes, on local landlords and the *muhtars* for lodging when visiting villages. Government agents also depended on the information they provided on cultivation patterns in their areas. The state's dependence on these rural elites led to their increasing influence in Turkish politics by 1950 when the right-wing conservative Democrat Party (DP) rose to dominance with the shift to multi-party politics in 1946. The state, through the DP, incorporated Kurdish *agas* and sheiks among their ranks much like the new generation of Indian elites of the central Chiapan highlands. Consequently, the state sold some of its autonomy in the Kurdish east to the landowners and *muhtars* in order to augment its capacity by some degree. The state, therefore, had to continue its reliance on these local elites, and narrow patron-client networks grew at the expense of the development of broader trust-networks.

Post-revolutionary Mexico and Turkey both punished those local elites that challenged their hegemony. But low state capacity, the result of their insurmountable historical legacies of negotiated-intensive state building, signified that these states could never wholly eliminate the local elites that had challenged them, instead incorporating them as intermediaries into self-serving patron-client networks. Both states sold some their state autonomy to these elites to ensure some state presence in the regions. But the capture of local bureaucracies and state-led programs by these self-serving elites obviated the development of broader trust-networks between state and society.

4.3 1950-1980, a Propitious Environment for the EZLN and the PKK

This period in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan is marked by a greater monopolization of power and resources by local elites who exploited their positions as intermediaries for the central state to enrich themselves and marginalize political opposition. There were also significant areas where such elites, and therefore, any kind of state presence did not exist—places where social hierarchies within the villages and communities were not as strong, as they depended on more marginal economic activities such as subsistence and contraband.

After the 1950s, however, particularly by the 1970s, the populations of these areas began to have deal with and confront the central state more directly. An increasingly repressive state, with support from their local agents, sought a greater control over the daily lives of these communities. State encroachment coincided and collided with demographic pressures, resulting in greater political conflict, violence, lawlessness, and uncertainty—conditions ripe for inroads by revolutionary movements in the form of the EZLN and the PKK.

4.3.1 Chiapas

Cárdenas had called for a Pan-American Indigenous Congress in 1940 during his visit to Chiapas. What came of that conference, which took place in 1941, was INI, based on Indianism, the ideology of turning Indians into modern and loyal citizens. While it can be argued that the INI had good intentions of bringing education and development to the Indian villages of the highlands, it ended up being subsumed into the local networks of power. INI ultimately ended up being exploited by the local elites for their narrow interests. Over time, this sharpened the class divisions and social cleavages in many parts of the highlands. Certain Ladino families and large landowners benefited from the resources made available by the institute.

As we saw above, the indigenous leadership, the young scribes, of the highlands had also emerged from the *Posht* war in the 1950s with higher levels of autonomous power while simultaneously becoming linked to the dominant political party of the state, the PRI (the Institutional Revolutionary Party). The INI made pacts with these young scribes who ran the municipal governments of the highland Indian villages, which, in turn, further legitimized their monopolistic power over these communities—what Aubry (2005:165-166; see also Rus 2004) called the emergence of *caciquismo* (*cacique* being the local strong man). Aubry writes that the cooperatives and programs of the INI became the personal business ventures and property of the scribes. The health clinics and the schools built through the INI became “platforms of power and pressure.” The scribes would give their allies favorable posts within INI projects. Individuals and groups who sought to take initiatives independent of the INI, and thus of the scribes, were reviled and “punished” with expulsion from the community. The INI inadvertently facilitated the

elimination of political rivals. The elimination of rivals facilitated the business interests of the scribe leaders and their access to resources through the funding that came with the INI. These projects and cooperatives essentially turned into private business ventures for the Indian elites. Instead of bringing much-needed resources to these communities, it became a means of establishing associations between the scribes and former-scribes (who were turning into municipal presidents) with ambitious Ladinos who came to recognize and Indian leadership with whom they were prepared to do business with starting by the middle of the 1950s (Rus 2004).

The scribes or *caciques*, through their control of the institutional (through INI), political, economic, and ceremonial Catholic life of their villages consolidated their power over new generations of young people in the highland communities of Chamula, Zinacantán, Tenejapa, Huixtán, and less so in Mitontic, and San Andrés (see Rus 2004:274-277). The young men of these communities could not escape *cacique* power. They usually left for seasonal work in the lowland valley as migrant laborers or temporary sharecroppers, but had to return to their highland villages.

Nevertheless, by the 1970s, many came to challenge the power of the *caciques* in places like Chamula, which seemed to spark opposition following the so-called “Rebellion of Chamula” in 1968. The Municipal President of the town in that year, a former scribe who came to office under Urbina, mobilized the young men of the community for the building of the local seat of government and imposed a tax to fund the construction. Convinced that the Municipal President was pocketing the money, 3,000 of the young adult males of the town (a fourth of the population) organized a protest and marched to San Cristóbal to demand his removal from office.

Tensions grew in the highland communities, and by the middle of the 1970s half of the Indian communities had active movements of opposition. The *caciques* of Chamula labeled the activists as “enemies of tradition” and managed to expel hundreds of them. By the early 1980s, those forced to leave from the troubled highland communities formed “dozens” of new colonies in San Cristóbal and the Lacandón forest.

In the highland communities further north, however, in places like Oxchuc, Tenango, Bachajón, and Yajalón, younger generations had the opportunity to break free from the near absolute control of their leaders by simply migrating to the Lacandón forest or to the valleys of Ocosingo first and then later into the forest. This process had started in earnest by the end of the 1950s, facilitated by the construction of new highways.

As the highlands saw an expansion of the highway system in the 1950s, there was a greater integration of the agricultural production of the region into the national economy, opening new opportunities for large landowners (*finqueros*) who continued to operate a manorial system of dependent peasant labor (see Rus 2004). The state’s interest in promoting greater economic exploitation of the region led it to provide certificates of protection for the *finqueros* (*certificados de inafectabilidad*) guaranteeing them amnesty from land reform. It also offered them easy access to credit and other amenities in order to promote commercial agriculture. In effect, new alliances were being forged between the state and the *finqueros* of the highlands and the zone between Las Margaritas and Ocosingo.

1960 saw an intensification of the colonization of the Lacandón emerging largely from two focal points: Ocosingo and Las Margaritas. The great majority of the Indians

that arrived in the forest were from the highlands, having abandoned their communities for lack of cultivable lands. Others arrived from the *finquero* zone located between Las Margaritas and Ocosingo. The latter were escaping the poor working conditions of the large estates. The high rate of population growth was directly responsible for the dearth of lands available for cultivation in the highlands.²⁷

Table 4.1 provides the population statistics for the different decades among the varied highland communities from 1960-1990. Chiapas as a whole had a faster rate of growth between 1970 and 1990 (3.64% annually) than the rest of the country (2.64%) (Olivia Pineda 2004:281-282). The highlands, in turn, had a higher rate of growth (3.80%) than Chiapas as a whole during the same period. What is also of note is the large percentage of the population consisting of people 15 years of age or younger. 56.01% of this population from among eleven highland communities in 1990 was illiterate, while the average for the state was 30.01%, and 12.6% for the nation (see Olivia Pineda 2004:282). Clearly, these figures for the highlands reflect low institutional capacity as investment in key services such as education was very limited.

²⁷The growth in populations, in turn, had a serious impact on land distribution among highland communities. The community of Apas, Zinacantan, for example (Rus & Collier 2002:165), in 1967, shows that from among 147 married men, 90 had *ejidal* landholdings of an average of 3.64 hectares each. Of the 57 that had no land, 30 were expecting to inherit land, while the other 27 were not. The average landholding size thus dropped to 2.2 hectares. We can see significant variation, therefore, within these communities. With a 27.1% increase in population between 1967 and 1981 (not the highest rate of growth among highland communities), average landholdings decreased even more.

Table 4.1: Population Growth in the Highlands, 1960-1990

MUNICIPALITIES	1960	1970	1980	1990	Rate 70-90	Population 15 Years Old and Higher	Percent of Population Less Than 15 Years Old
Chalchihuitan	2,940	2,996	5,564	9,442	5.91%	4,429	53.09%
Chamula	26,789	29,357	31,364	51,757	2.88%	27,235	47.38%
Chanal	4,210	3,951	5,019	7,195	3.04%	3,378	53.05%
Chenalhó	10,553	13,522	18,400	30,680	4.18%	14,878	51.51%
Huixtán	7,421	10,323	13,340	17,669	2.72%	9,184	48.02%
Larrazar	7,337	8,101	10,591	15,303	3.23%	7,326	52.13%
Mitontic	4,677	3,339	4,913	5,783	2.78%	2,904	49.78%
Oxchuc	12,579	17,993	24,879	34,868	3.36%	17,648	49.39%
Pantelhó	4,967	7,287	9,305	13,131	2.99%	6,576	49.92%
San Cristóbal	27,198	32,833	60,550	89,335	5.13%	51,796	42.02%
Tenejapa	9,768	12,930	20,642	27,217	3.79%	13,635	49.90%
Zinacantán	7,650	11,428	13,006	22,392	3.42%	11,709	47.71%
Total Highlands	126,089	154,060	217,573	324,772	3.80%	170,698	47.44%
Total Chiapas	1,210,870	1,569,053	2,084,717	3,210,496	3.64%	1,779,514	44.57%

Source: Olivia Pineda (2004:281)

The excess population of young people with little education led them to the Lacandón forest in search for cultivable land. The movement by these colonists into the Lacandón, combined with the arrival of lumber companies and their workers, led to a record rate of destruction of the forest between 1964 and 1974 (De Vos 2004[2002]:32).

This movement of people into the forest began to worry the state in terms of its control over the region (De Vos 2004[2002]). The state then overreached through its dramatic reactions to the situation. It declared 401,959 hectares of land located within the municipalities of Ocosingo, Trinitaria, La Independencia, La Libertad, and Las Margaritas as national territory in 1967. The state wanted to take control of the colonization process of the Lacandón forest by officially identifying “New Centers of *Ejidal* Populations” (NCPE) in the Marqués de Comillas region.

The state's interest in controlling the population movements within the forest shows a new political dynamic taking shape for the indigenous communities of the region. Since the middle of the 1950s, the "principal enemy," according to Estrada (2007:77), had been the oppressive landowner, the *finquero* or haciendo owner, who had control over their lives. Now, they had to deal with a "more powerful" and "abstract" entity: "the state personified by the government and its different agencies and institutions..."

The state's 1972 declaration of 614,321 hectares as the "communal lands that have belonged and continue to belong to the Lacandón tribe [of Indians] since time immemorial" (see De Vos 2004[2002]:33), creating the "Lacandón Zone," was the clearest example of this new dynamic. The purpose of this decree was to put an end to the uncontrolled colonization of the northern and western part of the forest and close the center of it off to all human movement (De Vos 2004[2002]). For De Vos, this declaration, which put 66 heads of households as the legitimate owners of 600,000 hectares, reflects the "incoherent," "contradictory," and "counterproductive" policies of the state towards the forest and its populations.

Again we see evidence of low state capacity, for the 1972 decision was based on: (1) poor and often incorrect sources of data collected by governmental agencies; (2) the personal influence of certain interested parties who had access to leaders at the highest levels, thus revealing the personalized nature by which policies are articulated by leaders in Mexico;²⁸ (3) and the contradictory nature of populist politics—where rhetoric is

²⁸Gertrude Duby Blom, the wife of the famous anthropologist Francis Blom, had a private meeting with Mexican President Luis Echeverría Álvarez in April of 1970 at her home in San Cristóbal, arranged through

openly populist, but actual policy reflects the ulterior motives of the state in claiming ultimate patrimonial rights over territory in order to push through private commercial interests.²⁹

Due to such ineffective and incoherent approaches to policy, it is not surprising then that the 1972 declaration led to serious conflicts between the Lacandón Indian community of new officially recognized landowners and the 5,000 Tzeltal and Chol colonists that had established 30 communities in the prohibited area. The latter were essentially turned into squatters by the government decree, heightening tensions and anxieties over land tenure. Some of these 30 colonies packed up their things and migrated once again to zones with already significant populations, while others stayed and resisted, fighting for new land titles from the state along with adequate services.

Six years later in 1978, the state once again committed the same errors of policy (De Vos 2004[2002]) by declaring The Integral Reserve of the “Montes Azules” Biosphere (RIBMA). State officials erred by listing the area as unpopulated when it contained ten colonies of approximately 5,000 inhabitants. Moreover, the declared zone overlapped with 80% of the Lacandón Community’s territory from the 1972 declaration, including other areas that were already colonized. State officials did try to rectify their

their mutual friend, the recently elected governor of Chiapas, Manuel Velasco Suárez. The meeting, according to De Vos (2004[2002]:97) revolved around her petitions to the president and governor to put a halt to the activities of the lumber company Maderera Maya in the Lacandón and to the continued colonization of the forest by Tzeltal and Chol Indians. Gertrude Blom took her message to the national public in September of 1971, and President Echeverría signed the decree on the Lacandón in November of the same year.

²⁹ For instance, as De Vos (2004[2002]:107-108) notes, the 1972 law that awarded the 600,000 hectares so generously to the Lacandón Indians did not actually guarantee exclusive use of the land by this group. The state claimed ultimate rights of management (*el acomodo*) of the land in terms of what is best for the “progress” of the region and the country. Thus, “[t]he multiple incongruencies detected [in the resolution] insinuate that the federal governments apparent interest to revindicate the historic rights of the Lacandón peoples was nothing more than a quickly constructed smoke screen to hide other interests.”

calculations but new plans were never put into effect (see De Vos 2004[2002]). Other declarations followed in 1979, 1986, and 1992 that were reflective of the problems created by the earlier ones. Despite the official policy of natural conservation evinced in the declarations, the state did not or could not stop the continued advances of the lumber companies, ranchers, and peasants into the forest. From 1960 to 2000 more than 50 percent of the forest's surface was destroyed (see De Vos 2004[2002]:37).

Correspondingly, the Lacandón rainforest saw a significant increase in population. Table 4.2 shows that the different municipalities of the forest have experienced a nearly twenty-fold growth of population from 1920 (20,089) to 2000 (376,515), with the most dramatic increases occurring between 1960 and 2000. The Ocosingo municipality, the center of the EZLN uprising saw its population more than double between 1970 and 1980. In the following decade, it saw its population increase by another 54%. In addition to immigration, the birth rate in the area has also been among the highest in the country, and further demographic pressures had arrived with the 20,000 to 30,000 Guatemalan refugees who made their way to the southern border area of the forest, Marqués de Comillas, in 1981-82 (De Vos 2004[2002]). They fled the guerrilla war raging in their country. The refugees only brought in to greater relief the severe marginalization in which the Lacandón region existed, as it is the poorest within the country. Its infrastructure is severely deficient in terms of communication, education, health care, electricity, plumbing, and potable water.

Table 4.2: Population Growth in the Municipalities of the Lacandón Forest

Year	Altamirano	Margaritas	Ocosingo	Palenque	TOTALS	Chiapas
1920	2,794	10,207	5,797	1,291	20,809	421,744
1930	4,759	10,642	14,795	1,652	31,848	529,983
1940	5,465	14,033	11,271	3,455	34,224	679,885
1950	4,655	18,390	13,940	6,206	43,191	907,026
1960	5,783	24,689	19,800	12,412	62,684	1,210,870
1970	8,354	32,524	34,356	23,205	98,439	1,569,053
1980	12,099	42,443	69,757	35,430	159,729	2,084,771
1990	17,026	86,568	121,012	63,209	287,815	3,210,496
2000	22,157	97,389	171,495	85,474	376,515	3,920,515

Source: De Vos 2004[2002]:

The various colonies and settlements of the Lacandón forest formed new organizations to confront their tenuous social and political conditions. Since the 1960s, Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia of the San Cristóbal dioceses led a pastoral movement influenced by Liberation Theology. This led to a flurry of organizing by the Jesuits in Bachajón and the Dominicans in Ocosingo. They reformed the missionary process, hiring and training local catechists from among the Indian communities who spread the word in their own languages. By the early 1970s, 1,000 Indian catechists were working in their own villages and settler communities in the forest (Womack 1999). These catechists soon became the leaders of defiant Chol and Tzeltal communities that came to challenge state policies in the Lacandón forest.

Indeed, Catholic schools became centers of learning for future EZLN guerrillas. The historian Jan De Vos (a conversation January 12, 2008, San Cristóbal) explained to me that when he first arrived in Chiapas as a Jesuit priest, he met the *comandantes* Moisés and Tacho of the EZLN as young students studying with the Marists in San Cristóbal. I also interviewed a current EZLN member (January 5, 2008, at an *ejido* in Las

Margaritas municipality) who told me he first left his community located in the Lacandón forest in order to attend a Catholic school in San Cristóbal starting at the age of twelve. There, he said, he first developed his political beliefs of indigenous liberation.

Thus religion and Liberation Theology became a basis for social solidarity and political organizing for legal tenancy of the lands the Indians were occupying. The 1974 Indigenous Congress held in San Cristóbal became the official public expression of the ethnic and agrarian goals of the Indian communities under the sponsorship of the Catholic Church. The key to the event was the cross-community organizing taking place for months prior to the Congress, where Indians from the various geographical zones were meeting, conferring, and deliberating, on questions, statements, and organization of delegates (see Womack 1999).

Reformed Catholic missionary work in the communities led to autonomous organizational structures among the Indians. But the Church also saw leftists beginning to infiltrate its ranks, and left-wing activist organizations increasingly started arriving from the center of the country. After 1968, with the surge of the university student population in Mexico's major cities—a factor which Wickham-Crowley (1992) argues has played a major role in the emergence of revolutionary movements among Latin American countries in the 1970s and 80s—various leftist factions formed with networks throughout the country. They became increasingly militant following the bloody suppression of the student march in Mexico City that took place on June 10, 1971 (see Flores 2006). National politics began to intercede in what was taking place in Chiapas. It seems that the Church in San Cristóbal under Bishop Ruiz started a process that it no longer controlled.

Indian communities electing their own catechists now formed independent communal assemblies, rather than have them recruited by the missionaries. A left-wing militant group, known as the Unión de Pueblo from the University of Chapingo, capitalized on the discontent generated by the 1972 decree that conferred to 614,321 hectares of land to the 66 Lacandón families to begin organizing among the Tzeltal settlements in the Ocosingo municipality. This led to the formation in 1975 of the *ejidal* union, La Unión Qu'iptik ta Lekubtesel—"mother of all the *ejidal* unions to follow" (De Vos 2004[2002]:41)—to which only Catholics belonged.

A conservative reaction to Bishop Ruiz and the Church in San Cristóbal began to brew within the state of Chiapas and around the country. Leftist factions were now working with the diocese. The Mexican Communist Party's Farm Workers and Peasant Independent Central (CIOAC) was one such group working to establish a farm workers' union in the northern valleys. Another was the Maoist Proletarian Line (LP), formed among university teachers and students in Mexico City. Contacts between this group and the diocese started in 1976 (see Womack 1999).

LP association with the San Cristóbal diocese led to a division of labor. The priests were directing pastoral work while the LP was directing political organizing. In this way, the Maoists took the lead in the further politicization of indigenous communities. Other Maoists were also organizing in the area of Las Margaritas. By 1980 these groups successfully collaborated in forming an umbrella *ejidal* union, linking the Ocosingo union of *ejidos* with the two unions from Las Margaritas. The group that emerged was the Union of Ejido Unions and Associated Peasant Groups of Chiapas, representing 156 communities, 13 municipalities, and 10,000 families. This organization

took a religiously neutral line (Womack 1999). In 1981 the group organized public protests, with support from Mexico City activists, against government evictions of Indian communities in the Lacandón Forest. Even though these groups did not openly speak of an armed struggle, their activities led to angry reactions from among the commercial elite of San Cristóbal.

These fears from among local conservatives combined with national strategic concerns during the López Portillo's presidency (1976-1982) that Central American revolutionary movements would spread to Mexico's southeast, threatening its oil industry (see CIEPAC 1999). As a response, starting in 1980, the Mexican state embarked on a militarization program in Chiapas, increasing both the number and quality of troops. As part of this project, General Absalón Castellanos Domínguez—a prominent *finquero* from the municipality of Las Margaritas—was appointed governor of Chiapas in 1982. General Enrique Cervantes Aguirre was appointed commander of the Seventh Military Region. The state began to clamp down on political activism in Chiapas during the 1980s. Part of this strategy included utilizing paramilitary groups as a means of maintaining social order. The White Guards was one such group serving as gunmen for ranchers and landowning families. This group worked with the Public Security Police in instances to evict peasants who had occupied lands (see CIEPAC 1999). John Womack (1999:35) writes of the 1980s, “The death threats began with police terrorist operations, to create a climate of intimidation.”

4.3.2 Turkish Kurdistan

The authoritarian system that Mustafa Kemal had established came into crisis by 1945. Challengers from within Kemal's own party, the Republican People's Party (RPP, or CHP) were allowed to form a party of opposition. The Democrat Party (DP), dominated by the *aga* class of large landholders, formed in 1946 and won the parliamentary elections of 1950. The DP exploited the religious resentments of the largely rural population, which constituted 80% of the country, against the strongly secular RPP. The RPP tried but failed to eliminate the Sufi brotherhoods (*tarikats*). These brotherhoods, along with the sheiks, of Turkish Kurdistan supported the DP.

The DP presided over a religious turn in Turkey starting in the 1950s. It tried to push a new kind of Turkish nationalism, one tied to its historical roots of religion. Kurdish rural society became the bastion of religious conservatism, and the Turkish state under the DP began providing support to these elements. This condition contributed to the social-political divisions in the region as members of the secular left were seen as the enemy along with the Kurdish Alevi of Tünceli (previously Dersim).

As discussed above, large landowners had found favor in the 1940s through the state's rural policies. The DP was the party of large landowners, and as such they co-opted the landed *aga* class in Kurdistan. The state strengthened the *agas'* position—including those of landowning sheiks or those sheiks connected to the *agas* by marriage³⁰—as intermediaries between village issues and government officials. In

³⁰ Examples are Kamran Inan who became a deputy of the DP in 1954. He was the son of Sheik Salah al Din of Khizan, an exiled member of the Sheik Said rebellion. Kamran Inan later on became a member of the RPP. Kinyas Kartal was tribal *aga* and when on to become a religious leader in the form of a disciple of Said Nursi. He was elected deputy of Van in 1960 (see McDowall 1996).

addition to those Kurdish families who supported the Turkish state against the rebellious factions in the region, the DP won the support of the exiled *aga* families who were allowed to return to their lands. When the DP came to power in 1950, “a substantial proportion of its vote came from...lately exiled aghas forming a significant element in the new Grand National Assembly (GNA)” (McDowall 1996:397).

The DP also shifted the statist agenda of the RPP to a more economically liberal agenda, pursuing a more non-interventionist approach to the rural economy, similar to what happened in Mexico by the late 1940s and early 1950. The RPP had proposed a land reform bill in 1945 targeting state-owned, *vakf* (pious foundations) lands, and the properties of landowners owning more than 50 hectares, a sizable group in the Kurdish areas. The ascent of the DP,³¹ which presented itself as the defender of private property, however, brought a stop to legitimate or serious efforts to implement any such policy. From 1945-50, land reform consisted only of the redistribution of village communal grazing lands. Peasants often received land barely suited for cultivation, and others still found themselves deprived of grazing lands altogether (Mcdowall 1996). Yet, the peasantry did not agitate for greater reforms because, as with the local elites in the Chiapan highlands, the Kurdish landowning class put forth themselves as defenders of the traditional order in their regions, and depicted state-led initiatives of reform as attempts to destroy traditional solidarities. The peasantry voted as directed by their *agas* and sheiks.

³¹According to Karapinar’s discussion (2005:178-179), it is not clear how the Sinan family came to own the lands of Sinan village. It seems, however, that the family had obtained land titles for state-owned lands from the DP-dominated government starting at the end of the 1950s. Apparently, an official land commission had visited Sinan in 1957; this was part of a registry process in which land owned by the state was being transferred to private ownership. Thus, just as in Chiapas starting in the 1950s, large landholders were benefiting from state policies.

The *agas* thus continued to constitute a powerful class as a result of the shift to multiparty politics. As Aydin (1986:60) notes, “The existence of very large holdings has been one of the most important features of the region since the sixteenth century, simply because large amounts of land were granted to local notables, tribal leaders, etc. of the area, by the Ottoman administration for political reasons.” The Ottoman legacy is evident by the presence of *aga* families who own one or more villages (see Table 4.3 below). According to studies carried out by the state between 1963-1971, of the 4,194 villages that existed in southeastern Turkey at the time, 3,767 belonged to the villagers, 170 to individuals, 161 to particular families, and 96 belonged to, what Aydin (1986:60) calls, “dynasties.” Thus 11.4 percent of the villages belonged to large landowning individuals, families, or dynasties. Yet, other villages carried on the *iltizam* land system leftover from the Ottoman Empire. This system was characterized by, in concept or in origin, an equal distribution of land among the peasants of the village, sort of what one would find in the Mexican *ejido*.

Table 4.3: Variation of Village Types of Ownership in Southeastern Turkey, 1963-1971

Owned by Villagers	Owned by Individuals	Owned by Particular Families	Owned by “Dynasties”	Total Number of Villages
3,767	170	161	96	4,194

Source: Aydin 1986:60

The region thus presents a varied mix of small landholding peasantry: areas that combined small-scale agriculture with semi-nomadic patterns of live-stock production as

in the province of Hakkari (see Yalçın-Heckman 1991), with landless, sharecropping peasants of differing kinds of arrangements, and large landowners of various sizes with local political power and influence. In the border regions, there further existed small-scale agriculture mixed with illegal cross-border trade as in Mardin province (see Ertürk 1980). These variations also meant that where large landed elites did not exist, as such elites tended to act as intermediaries for state power, the state had thus has a minimal presence³² with perhaps the police or gendarme located in the nearest administrative town center.

The socio-economic variation also had a greater political implication. As in the Lacandón, those large landed elites, such as the Buçak family of Şiverek township and the Suleymanlar of Hilvan township (see below), could seek to expand their influence and control over the nearby villages as sponsors of state power, inevitably leading to greater tensions in the countryside. This is how, in fact, the PKK began winning support among peasants for an armed insurrection.

In a situation similar to Chiapas, we see “intra-regional polarization”³³ (Karapinar 2005:174) in Turkish Kurdistan in terms of forms of cultivation and landholding types, which provides a structural basis for the social and political divisions

³² This is also evidenced by very low levels of infrastructural development, inclusively the elements of commercial agriculture—where, for instance, tractors may have arrived, but did so relatively late such as in the post-1980 era, in comparison to their arrival in the 1950s for places such as the Diyarbakir valley.

³³ A *New York Times* article (12/17/04, “Turks Worry that a Union with Europe Will Cost them their Soul,” online International section), released on the day that the EU announced Turkey’s formal invitation to accession talks starting in October 2005, brought to light this aspect of intra-regional polarization, reflecting some of the deep social divisions plaguing the country. It reported a conversation with a powerful hereditary landlord, Mr. Nahit Koran, who controls thousands of acres of land and several villages located within Turkish Kurdistan, east of Gaziantep. Mr. Koran has domain over the lives of his tenants as they work on his cotton fields; he is the owner of their homes, pays them a fixed wage for their work, mediates disputes, finances bride prices, and sends his workers to the hospital when they fall ill. Mr. Koran is a member of the ultranationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP).

that exist in both contexts. In Turkish Kurdistan, as in Chiapas, these divisions only increased from 1950 to 1980, as tractors were introduced by the beginning of the 1950s in certain areas, and some landlords were able to enclose their lands, creating a migrant peasant population. But what is also important is that state-sponsored power of the large landed interests came to bump up against those areas, villages, and populations where such arrangements did not exist or did so to a lesser extent, leading to greater tensions.

The existence of these large types of landholdings indicates that sharecropping has been a significant part³⁴ of the rural economy in the Kurdish areas, and this economic arrangement has meant that the landlords—including those who are not tribal leaders (see Karapınar 2005)—can secure strong political influence by controlling local institutions, similar to the Indian elites in the Chiapan highlands, in the region which in turn furthers their economic dominance (see Aydin 1986, Ertürk 1980).³⁵ Sharecropping ensures strong economic power as it brings exclusive access to credits and inputs such as fertilizer for the large landowners. With the kind of power that the sharecropping economy brought the Kurdish landowners, they also sought to maintain to some degree the rural population in place as it provides them with a ready pool of rural labor (Aydin 1986, Karapınar 2005). Again, the *agas* of the Kurdish areas of southeastern Turkey were

³⁴ According to one study which Aydin (1986:61) cites, 79.3 percent of landless households had been sharecropping or renting land.

³⁵ Yakın Ertürk (1980:113), based on her ethnographic study of two villages in Mardin province, describes the relationship between the peasant and the *aga* as a “monopolistic power structure” in which the former finds himself at a disadvantage in the marketplace because of his dependency on the latter. The *aga*’s dominance is also strengthened by the Farmers Union (*Çiftçi Birliği*) which protects him from governmental attempts at regulating the labor relations between landlord and laborer. This is further evidence of the weakness of state bureaucratic autonomy and of the state’s capacity to develop trust networks with the population in the Kurdish regions. Barış Karapınar (2005) in his fieldwork in the village of Sinan of Diyarbakir province describes in detail how the local *aga* used his political power to further his social control over the local share-cropping peasants and his economic control over the lands used for cotton production by following government initiatives designed to “develop” the region. The political structure of the village combined with socio-economic changes led to a worsening of the “ascribed inequalities” found in the village.

similar to the *finqueros* of eastern Chiapas and the Indian elites of the Chiapan highlands in their political and economic domination of their village communities. This kind of power among local elites ensured not only the continuation of the rural structure of Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan, but also the states' inability to autonomously regulate the economic and social activities of the population in the region, as they were forced to rely on these same elites as intermediaries of their authority.³⁶

Indeed, the *agas* of the southeast had accumulated so much land and power that the National Unity Committee (NUC), formed following the 1960 military coup against the growing dominance of the DP, banished 55 of them and declared that it would redistribute their lands to the peasants. Political allies in Ankara delayed the process and when in 1961 the NUC turned rule back to a coalition-driven civil government, the *agas* got their lands back. As McDowall (1996:400) writes, "It was a telling commentary on the powerful axis of mutual dependence that now existed between the political parties in Ankara and the aghas of Kurdistan," another example of compromised state autonomy.

After 1960, Turkish Kurdistan became the site of competition for the variety of parties that formed following the coup seeking to win the support of the various influential *aga* families of the region. Significant social divisions emerged among towns and the rural areas. The Buçaks of Şiverek were among the most prominent of the regional families. They ran a paramilitary force that was later secretly and illegally enlisted by the state to fight the PKK (see below). Members of the family served in

³⁶ A journalist wrote of the conditions in Siverek in 1973: "Annazo's 20 families are landless. They receive free homes and half the earnings of the harvest in return for cultivating cotton, wheat, fruit trees and other crops. The real power in the region is held by big landowners... They function as unelected justices of peace, mayors and social workers in villages that lack any other governmental authority. Also they are often the only link between the village and the Government institutions in towns nearby" (quoted in McDowall 1996:400-401)

parliament as part of the Justice Party, the successor of the DP, and in their region they could bring in thousands of votes on election-day. The Suleymanlar of Hilvan supported the ultranationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP). The rivals of both tribes, the Kirvars, supported the RPP in Hilvan.

Meanwhile, the social and demographic shifts taking place since the 1940s began to challenge the control the Kurdish *agas* had on the peasant population. The “first wave of migration” began in the late 1940s and lasted to about 1980, and started with the mechanization of agriculture with the introduction of tractors. Virgin lands were turned over to cultivation and other lands were enclosed, turning traditional sharecroppers loose to migrate to cities. Growing peasant families also struggled to reproduce themselves with the land they owned, as land was divided equally among the married sons of the household. During this time, small-scale subsistence agriculture began to decline in terms of proportion of types of cultivation, particularly in the Diyarbakir and Gaziantep valley regions, pushing “millions of peasants” to migrate to urban centers first as seasonal workers with many turning into permanent residents over time. Consequently, the urban population went from constituting only 24.9 percent of the country in 1950 to 59.01 percent in 1990 (Betül Çelik 2005).

The second wave of migration from the Kurdish areas that started from the mid-1980s and lasted well into the 1990s was due to the state’s escalation in the military repression of the region of which I will discuss further in the following chapter. The city of Diyarbakir grew tremendously over the period of the first wave of migration. From a population of about 65,000 in 1956 Diyarbakir grew to 400,000 by 1990 (McDowall 1996). The population of the Kurdish areas also grew dramatically. For instance, in only

25 years, 1940-1965, the population of the Kurdish areas doubled (McDowall 1996). As in Chiapas, the Kurdish region showed a relatively high percentage (48 %) of people under the age of 15 by 1965, which was higher than the average of the country as a whole (41 %) (McDowall 1996).

Population growth led to greater pressures on land distribution, despite the clearing of new lands for agriculture. From 1950-1980 arable land in southeastern Anatolia increased from 1.6 million hectares to 3.5 million hectares (see Karapinar 2005). The number of rural households also increased by more than 210,000, with most of these (63 percent) occurring among the smallholding category (those holding less than 5 hectares). But most of the land expansion (nearly 40 percent) fell into the hands of the large landowners (those holding more than 50 hectares), while small landowners only received seven percent. Thus land inequality worsened.

But land pressures over all intensified. According to calculations from the statistics provided by Barış Karapinar (2005; see Table 4.4 below), while the average land size under the ownership of the smallholders was 2.55 hectares in 1950, this fell to 1.49 hectares by 1980. Corresponding decreases also occurred for households of the 5-9.9 hectares category, 10-19.9 hectares, and among, what Karapinar calls, the middle peasant category of 20-49.9 hectares.³⁷ Large landholders also lost size in terms of

³⁷ Aydin (1986:117-118) provides a different categorization of the middle peasant based on his fieldwork in the Kurdish village of Gısgıs in Diyarbakır province. Families that possess less than 5 hectares of land are considered small landholders because their property is not sufficient to sustain the household. Therefore, they have to look for additional sources of income. Families that have 5 to 20 hectares of land, according to Aydin, fall into the middle peasant category. This group has sufficient land to maintain a “decent living,” and even enough in some cases to save money. Larger landholders with larger savings can invest money in different enterprises, such as transportation, commerce, shops, etc.

average landholdings. Together these point to a foundation for greater land competition within rural society.

Table 4.4: Average Size of Landownership for the Different Ownership Categories in Southeastern Anatolia*, 1950 and 1980

Ownership Categories (Hectare)	1950	1980
0-4.9	2.55	1.49
5-9.9	7.83	6.42
10-19.9	13.97	12.67
20-49.9	31.54	28.08
50+	148.7	98.06

*For the provinces of Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Mardin, Muş, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Van.
Adapted from: Karapınar 2005

Despite increased urban migration, population growth, land pressures, and growing social inequality, the region did not have the appropriate levels of investment to accommodate its demographic shifts. Industrial development was low compared to the rest of the republic, and, of course, this explained the largely rural character of the area.³⁸ The communications and transportation infrastructure of the Kurdish areas have been sorely lacking. By 1981, 15 percent of the state highways and 65.2 percent of the provincial roads were not all weather roads in Turkey's southeast, while only 4.6 percent of the villages had telephones compared to 22 percent for the rest of the country (Aydin 1986:54). Further, 69.3 percent of the villages did not have a primary school (compared to 37.7 percent of villages in other regions) leading to an illiteracy rate of 57 percent in 1980 (compared to 30 percent for the rest of the country). Finally, health services in the in southeastern Anatolia have also been deficient (see Aydin 1986, Yalcin-Heckman 1992).³⁹

³⁸ That is why in 1980, 71 percent of the population involved in the economy in Southeastern Anatolia worked in agricultural activities, compared to 60 percent for Turkey as a whole (see Aydin 1986:53).

³⁹ Aydin (1986:55) notes that in 1963 that the policy of socializing health services started in eastern Anatolia. My mother, a pediatrician, was sent to Mardin province in the late 1960s as part of this program.

In terms of infrastructure, similar to the situation in eastern Chiapas and the highlands, many Kurdish villages were largely not integrated into the country as a whole as compared with the rest of Turkey. Nevertheless, the socio-economic changes afflicting the Kurdish regions, specifically migration to towns and cities, and the corresponding problems of social injustice, physical displacement, and economic deprivation, signified that Kurds were to play a leading role in the growing left-wing political movements that emerged in the late 1960s.

The 1960 military coup marked an attempt by the state to impose greater control on Turkey's southern border as Kurdish agitation in Northern Iraq became more confrontational with its central government. The NUC further formalized its resistance to expressions of Kurdish identity. It enacted Law 1587 which entailed programmatically changing Kurdish place names to Turkish ones. In 1961 the NUC enacted a law providing for the establishment of area boarding schools with the specific intent of assimilating Kurds. It instead opened opportunities for young Kurdish peasants to become educated and engage in national politics, including left-wing identity politics. A series of protests occurred in the same year in response to the NUC. These demonstrations took place in Mardin, Diyarbakir, Siverek, Bitlis, and Van, and the state's attempts at quelling them resulted in significant bloodshed (McDowall 1996).

Still, the NUC in 1962, in its interest to counteract the conservative and clerical forces that had coalesced under the now-shunned DP, enacted a new constitution, the

Despite initiation of health centers, "owing to the shortage of qualified staff (doctors, nurses, etc.) most of them do not function properly." Leyla Yalcin Heckmann (1991) notes the lack of health services in Hakkari province. Many of my respondents from the Kurdish areas have emphasized the same during their interviews.

“most liberal” (McDowall 1996:405) in the country’s history. This allowed for new forms of expression, association, and publications to spring forth. The constitution of 1962 also promised greater economic rights, including the limited right to strike for unions.

Kurdish intellectuals, in turn, started new publications focusing on Kurdish issues of political and social rights. By 1963 several of them were arrested and the publications were shut down. This repression, along with the oligarchy of political power in the hands of rival *agas* who dominated right-wing political parties, pushed many Kurdish intellectuals and increasingly ordinary Kurds towards the Turkish Workers’ Party (TWP or TIP in Turkish) after 1965. Kurds and Alevis came to constitute the core of the party as it promoted a challenge to *aga* interests of land ownership and leftwing ideologies (McDowall 1996). The TWP became publicly more strident in its views on the Kurdish question. The party was shut down following the 1970 military coup.

But by 1967, leftwing movements had proliferated. Trade unionists had formed their own Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Unions (DISK) having split from the state-controlled trade union congress. University leftist organizations also sprouted alongside, loosely associating with the Federation of Revolutionary Youth (Dev Genç), founded in 1969. This last association became the springboard for the revolutionary movements of the 1970s.

In 1967 Kurdish members of DISK, TWP, Dev Genç, and student associations organized mass meetings in Silvan and Diyarbakir. Thousands of people gathered in both cities leading to major protests for democratic rights and an end to oppression of the

Kurds. But more critically, these events signaled a political shift away from movements led by the *agas* to an urban-based struggle led by students and young professionals, including some of the children of the *aga* families sent to the cities to study in the universities (McDowall 1996).

The 1967 protests portended the period of deep unrest in 1969-71. Young leftwing activists, Turkish and Kurdish, became more militant, traveling to Lebanon to train in Fatah camps. By 1969, leftwing activism took on a greater ethno-nationalist bent, leading to a network of cultural clubs throughout Turkish Kurdistan as well as in Istanbul and Ankara. These coalesced in the form of the Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths (DDKO), whose members came from the student organizations and the other burgeoning leftist groups. The DDKO (see White 2000) argued that Eastern Turkey's underdevelopment of the Kurds was due to internal colonialism in which regional collaborators sought to oppress national groups on behalf of global imperialism. Thus they sought Kurdish national liberation on top of ending the class-based oppression of peasants. Their activists set out to "modernize" and educate the Kurdish peasant population and pushed for militant action. Activists, similar to CIOAC and the LP in Chiapas, went out to the countryside to setup programs to work with the peasants. The DDKO established a trend; many Kurdish respondents in my interviews spoke of the *talaba* (students) who came to their villages in the 1970s. One mother of a fallen PKK fighter described the situation in her village near the town of Midyat in the province of Mardin during this period:

They were the same young people of the village who went off to the schools [in cities and towns]. They were called *talaba* because they had gone off to school and became enlightened [*aydinlandi*] and then tried to teach the people in the

village. Later on they were called *apocu* [the early unofficial name for the PKK during the late 1970s]. They were relatives of many people in the villages, and that's why people would listen to them in the 1970s. (Interview conducted on October 12, 2006, Diyarbakir)

These young activists would work with the peasants in the fields in order to mobilize them for the movements. Mahmut Gezgör described how his older brother, Mustafa, tried to mobilize the peasantry who, in his role as a PKK fighter, was killed in action:

Lentils are sown by hand. Today it is modern; those things do not happen anymore. Back then, in order to organize the peasant workers, he would go and dress up like them, putting on a *şalvar* [baggy pants made of cloth worn by peasants] and a *kefye*, and collect the lentils by hand. This is what he would do when he was nineteen. The idea was to stand up to the *aga*. (From an interview by Ortadoğu Tarih Akademisi Kollektifi 2006:124)

Local right-wing conservative elements feared the worst and worked with the state to quell leftist activities in the countryside, similar to what occurred to Chiapas at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. Ankara sent a dispatch of commandos in January of 1970 to the Kurdish regions. These commandos carried out search and seizure operations in the villages that led to arbitrary acts of brutality against the peasants.⁴⁰ Political developments in March between the Iraqi central government and the Kurdish Mullah Mustafa Barzani administration in Northern Iraq only heightened Ankara's fears. In October 1970, the DDKO's leaders were arrested and the organization was shut down.

The military intervened in March of 1971 after new militant leftwing Turkish organizations carried out brazen bank heists and kidnapped American military personnel. Martial law was imposed on select provinces of the country, including major cities with

⁴⁰ See a commando report (quoted in McDowall 1996:409) for examples of the kinds of brutality meted out. The report corroborates statements provided to me by some of my respondents as to the kind of violence soldiers exacted on the people of their villages during this time.

universities and industry. The security forces arrested thousands in Turkish Kurdistan, 75 percent of who were from the rural areas (McDowall 1996).

1973 saw the return of civil administration and a new general election which brought Kemal's left-leaning RPP back to power under PM Bülent Ecevit. The *agas* and the sheiks of the countryside supported the rightwing and conservative Justice Party and the more Islamist National Salvation Party. Again, Turkish Kurdistan became further divided politically between urban and rural areas.

In the meantime, leftists were reorganizing. Ecevit amnestied thousands of those arrested in the 1971 coup. New Maoist and Marxist-Leninist groups emerged from Dev-Genç, as the university population dramatically increased from 1965 on, as it did in Mexico. Growth of leftist groups usually accompanied the simultaneous growth of hard-line rightwing groups, whose paramilitaries could be employed by the state and its agents to intimidate members of the left. Campuses across Turkey saw violent clashes between leftwing and rightwing students. These ideological confrontations also encompassed the other social divisions that existed in society: class, ethnic, religious, sectarian, and clan-based conflicts.

Greater Kurdish disaffection with the Turkish left led them to form their own parties by the mid-1970s whose members began to work increasingly among the peasant communities of the Kurdish countryside, even as they began to conflict more and more with the traditional tribal and religious authorities in the villages and regional cities. In addition to Istanbul and Ankara, the ethnically mixed cities in and around the Kurdish region became the site of bloody violence between the various politicized groups. State

security forces were also involved, giving freer reign to the activities of the rightist groups. Malatya and Maraş were among the regional cities with the worst violence in 1978 and 1979 where the rightists, Sunnis (Turkish and Kurdish), and urban dwellers attacked leftwing Kurdish, Alevi, and rural migrants (McDowall 1996). Security forces also discovered a stash of weapons in Maraş on their way to Kurdish separatists in Iran.

In response to the tremendous violence, the military stepped in on September 12, 1980, suspending civil rule. The repression that it brought to the Kurdish region was significant: 81,000 Kurds were imprisoned between 1980 and 1982, and two-thirds of the military was stationed there (McDowall 1996). The new 1982 constitution put severe restrictions on political activity, prohibiting any kind of activism based on class, sect, language, or race. The new constitution marked the imperative of the state to reassert control over the population. Trade unions were closed and political parties were severely curtailed in terms of their outreach to villages and communities. But the push by the central state to establish control over the Kurdish regions included, in addition to militarization, a dependence on large landholding families, such as the Buçaks, and their use of paramilitaries, as was the case in Chiapas.

As an example of such an alliance between the state and third-party actors was the scandal that ensued after a November 1996 car accident a hundred miles southwest of Istanbul. Killed in the car was a drug-runner, “a senior security official long involved in notorious anti-guerrilla operations in Turkish Kurdistan” (Randal 1997:252). The only survivor was Sedat Buçak of the powerful Buçak family. He was a member of parliament running a private counter-insurgency army and secretly receiving large sums of money to do so.

Michael Gunter (1997) and Hugh Poulton (1997) also discuss the politicization of the security forces and the civil bureaucracy after the 1980 coup as large numbers of Islamists were being recruited into these bodies in order to push for a new basis of social solidarity and to impose a harder line on leftists and separatist Kurds. The brutality of the violence in Turkey's southeast certainly heightened with the arrival of the Islamists into the security forces as Mater's (2006) interviews with Turkish soldiers attest to.

Turkish Kurdistan faced several similar political and social developments as Chiapas from 1950-1980. The power of the local elites in both regions strengthened dramatically as they exploited their positions as political intermediaries for the state, monopolizing the economic surplus of their regions. Dramatic population growth led to new land pressures and population movements, heightening tensions that merged with the emerging struggles found within national politics. Leftwing student movements, budding from the significant increase in the access to schools and the growing university-student population, brought new activists into Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan. They pushed for new forms of organized political action, creating new social networks in the regions. Traditional local authorities were increasingly challenged and social divisions sharpened.

In turn, both states, nervous of their inability to control the populations in question, in addition to the fears they had of larger Latin American and Middle Eastern instability, pushed them towards greater militarization and repression in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan. Low levels of state capacity brought negotiated-intensive legacies of state power back to the fore in the form of alliances with certain local elites and their paramilitaries, only increasing the levels of violence in the regions.

After 1980, the states sought to expand the frontiers of their power to regions where it ostensibly did not exist, the villages at the edges of state power. These were the settlements beyond key administrative townships, not controlled by local allies with institutional ties to the state. They were also areas close to distant border regions. The EZLN and the PKK, similarly, sought to establish their sphere of influence in these same zones of contention. The result was armed conflict.

4.4 A Brief History of the Origins of the EZLN and the PKK

Both organizations are products of the leftwing student movements that emerged in the latter half of the 1960s in the principal cities of their respective countries. They also grew out of the sharpening divisions between the various leftist groups after 1970, a product of both increasing state repression and ideological differences in terms of strategy and the role of armed struggle. The Forces of National Liberation (FLN, the core group that evolved into the EZLN) and the National Liberation Army (UKO, the core group that evolved into the PKK) also moved from the central cities of the country to the regions where they thought they could best challenge state power and carry out a full-blown revolution. They went to the southeast region of their respective countries, namely the villages of the Lacandón forest and Turkish Kurdistan, areas where tensions and state repression were heightening.

4.4.1 The EZLN

Carlos Tello Díaz (2005[1995]) and María del Carmen Legorreta Díaz (1998) provide perhaps the most detailed history in Spanish on the origins and development of the organization. The militant FLN is the direct result of the 1968 bloody student massacre of

Tlatelolco. That event activated the Insurgent Army of Mexico (EIM) in Chiapas, a group that waged war unsuccessfully against the Mexican state for a few months. Its leader, Mario Menéndez, a journalist from the Yucatan, dissolved the group deciding to put off armed struggle in order to develop a more effective plan for revolution. He, along with some friends, formed the FLN on August 6, 1969 in a “very modest house” in Monterrey located on Cinco de Mayo Street (Tello Díaz 2005[1995]:67). They elected their first leader, César Yáñez, a 26 year-old from Monterrey who had studied law at the University of Nuevo León. He directed the publication of the newspaper *Pueblo y Revolución* (People and Revolution). His second in command was Alfredo Zárate, a student of medicine also at the same university.

The FLN grew out of the activities at the Institute of Cuban-Mexican Cultural Relations, led by Yáñez. This center did not maintain contacts with the Mexican Communist Party. The communications officer, Mario Sánchez, alias Manolo, was the oldest member and a mechanic who had had ties with other militant groups: The Zapata Urban Front, The Movement of Revolutionary Action, and The Communist League of 23 of September. These groups engaged in similar tactics as some of the leftists in Turkey, namely kidnappings and bank robberies. Manolo had advised the FLN to take a more discretionary approach and cut ties with the other revolutionary groups.

By the beginning of the 1970s, the FLN had grown to some of the other states in the country. It had safe houses, weapons, and vehicles in the state of Mexico, Puebla, Veracruz, and of course in Nuevo León. After a gunfight with the police at their Monterrey safe house, several of the members left Puebla for Chiapas in 1972. They arrived in the heart of the Lacandón Forest, where the leaders had bought a ranch and

planned to cultivate chilies. The ranch was for military training. Since their arrival in the forest, Mario Sáenz, who had survived the gunfight in Monterrey, began his ascent leader of the organization.

State security forces in 1974 discovered another FLN safe house in Monterrey. The leader, Napoleón Glockner, alias Jaime, was taken prisoner. During torture he divulged the location of the central base (“*la casa grande*”) of the group to the police, which was in Nepantla in the state of Mexico. The army attacked the base on February 14, 1974, killing several of the members and apprehending the rest. With intelligence gathered from the raid and ensuing interrogations, state security forces prepared an attack on the ranch in the Lacandón Forest. The FLN put up only light resistance against the joint police and military action. Some fled into the forest, but several key members died, including César Yáñez. For the moment, the movement had disintegrated.

César’s brother, Fernando Yáñez, who had been leading the FLN branch in Tabasco, escaped from the safe house located in Mexico City and hid out in Tabasco during the spring of 1974. Others who survived the state’s crackdown on the organization joined him. Some of those who were arrested by the security forces rejoined the group after being released from prison in the 1970s. Within ten years, the group returned to the Lacandón Forest under the leadership of Fernando who took on the name Germán in honor of his brother’s middle name. He was seconded by Marcos (the Subcomandante), and together with one of the original members released from prison, Gloria Benavides or Ana, they formed the central leadership of what would become the EZLN.

Towards the end of the 1970s, the movement began expanding its networks throughout the country once again. They reestablished bases in Mexico City where they made sure to assassinate the members that had given them up to the state while under torture. Once in Mexico City, the FLN formed the Polit Bureau whose purpose was to educate their members in preparation for revolution. They started a publication by the name of *Nepantla* in honor of the attack on their base. They reactivated cells in Nuevo León, Veracruz, Puebla, Tabasco, the state of Mexico, and Chiapas where they had close tied agents—who had been recruited by Jorge Velasco, alias Ismael, one of the founders of *Nepantla*—working in the parish of Sabanilla.

Through the parish, Ismael established contacts with the peasants of the neighboring community of Huitiupán. The peasants here had a history of carrying out land invasions. Tello Díaz (2005[1995]:93) quotes the leader of the community, known as Paco by the FLN: “Some friends [from the parish of Sabanilla] introduced us to colleagues who spoke of an armed struggle; these were the FLN. We were happy to meet them because we believed the definitive solution to the conflicts was armed struggle.” Huitiupán became the source of the first group of Indians to join the movement. Mario—the youngest among them at 11 years-old, and who, Tello Díaz notes, did not have clear reasons for joining—agreed to live in the organization’s safe houses. The majority of these were Tzotzil Indians, several of which were related to Paco. Family ties, thus, served as an early basis for recruitment. Mario went on to become one of the “top insurgents” for the EZLN.

By the beginning of the 1980s, the movement found strength and support in the parish of Sabanilla, and then expanded its activities to the area around San Cristóbal. This

did not come without difficulty because there were various clandestine movements competing for peasant support.⁴¹ The FLN had some success in the highlands. The FLN “offered services” to the peasants and centered their activities in the Municipality of San Cristóbal, among communities that Tello Díaz notes had a “very combative history.” They were peasants, often landless, who had been expelled from their original highland villages. Tello Díaz (2005[1995]:94) writes that the FLN recruited “many” of its Indian militants here who were to later form the “nucleus” of the EZLN.

As of 1981, as the FLN solidified its networks in the highlands, it also looked to expand further in the Lacandón Forest. In 1979 the FLN recruited one of the pastoral agents from the San Cristóbal diocese who was at the time working among the indigenous communities of the *Cañadas* subregion of the forest (Legorreta Díaz 1998). The FLN also established contacts with Slop.⁴² The latter group was the product of the San Cristóbal’s efforts, under Bishop Samuel Ruiz, to reestablish the Church’s control over some of the communities they had lost to the Maoist LP. The FLN’s collaboration with Slop led to greater inroads among the communities of the forest, although it had to compete with a myriad of other groups, some more radical than others. It is significant that the official party of the state, the PRI, did not have any contacts here, indicating again that the state would have to be one of several competing to win the support of the peasants in the area.

⁴¹ Tello Díaz (2005[1995]:94) quotes some FLN members: “The people who put us in contact with the peasants got involved in reform movements that were unnecessarily clandestine, and in their confusion they would drag the peasants in various directions.”

⁴² The word *Slop* in Tzeltal signifies “root.” A member of the organization described its objectives: “a clandestine organization set up by the priests and advisors of the diocese in the Cañadas in order to bring together the principle religious and political leaders of the region that were closest to the Church” (quoted in Legorreta Díaz 1998:183).

The state under the PRI Governor Juan Sabines (1976-1982) tried to co-opt several of the peasant leaders and have them join the state-run National Confederation of Peasants (CNC). Sabines' failure in this regard led to an increasing number of armed confrontations. The two groups that obliged were CIOAC and the Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization (OCEZ). Confronting the state and its allies soon weakened these groups (Tello Díaz 2005[1995]). The Union of Unions found itself broken apart by internal ideological divisions, forcing the group's non-Indian activists to leave the area in 1983. This is when the FLN stepped in to fill the organizational void in the Cañadas. Between 1983 and 1988 practically all the communities of the Cañadas, having previously belonged in their majority to the Union of Unions, joined the FLN armed movement (Legorreta Díaz 1998).

The communities were ready for the more radical approach of the FLN. The pastoral agents of the San Cristóbal dioceses working in the communities had been heavily influenced by Liberation Theology, and had extensive ties to the revolutionary movements of Nicaragua and El Salvador. These agents began to push for a more militant approach, expressing impatience with the Union of Unions leadership in their attempts to negotiate with the Mexican state for accommodation (Legorreta Díaz 1998).⁴³

The pastoral agents took advantage of a crisis of faith that emerged as a result of the Union of Unions' failure to establish a credit union while engaged in negotiations with the state. The agents pushed for Indians to re-take control of the political leadership

⁴³ María del Carmen Legorreta Díaz adds that the pastoral agents were heavily impacted by the assassination of Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador. They also saw significant parallels with what was taking place in their region of Ocosingo and Las Margaritas and what was happening in El Salvador. The arrival of General Absalón Castellanos Domínguez as governor in 1982, the large landowner of Las Margaritas municipality, only confirmed their fears.

in their movements, a move that led to a more coherent discourse of ethno-nationalism known as *indianismo* and resulted in the formation of Slop. *Indianismo* took on millenarian elements of resistance against the socio-political structure imposed on the Indians since the Colonial era. The ideology called for targeting the traditional Indian leadership—the village elders and the *caciques* or *caxlanes*--that helped propagate the dominant structure. Historically, *indianismo* recalled the way Indian laborers suffered in the *fincas*, or large estates, before migrating into the forest during the prior generation (Legorreta Díaz 1998).

The ideological foundation of Slop made it a natural ally of the FLN, which was proposing a national revolution to overthrow the Mexican state and for violent revenge against the traditional Indian leadership that supported it (Legorreta Díaz 1998). The pastoral agents of Slop began to integrate the FLN and its leaders into the political structure of the villages, helping it to win a large number of recruits. The EZLN is clearly a product of the pre-existing and changing organizational networks that had developed among the peasant communities of the Lacandón Forest.

4.4.2 *The PKK*

Aliza Marcus (2007) and Ismet Imset (1992) provide the most detailed historical accounts of the PKK as an organization, but not without some discrepancies between them. The origins of the group date back to the early 1970s, a time, as in Mexico, when various organized leftwing groups were active. Similarly as in Mexico, events of severe state repression, such as the military coup of 1971, also hardened the positions of the young leftist activists.

Abdullah Ocalan, the leader and one of the founders of the PKK, was a student of political science at the University of Ankara and had been participating in the leftist youth movements of Dev-Genç. A seven-month stint in prison in 1972 for his involvement in an illegal demonstration brought him in contact for the first time with those of the left who were earnestly planning an armed revolt against the state (Marcus 2007). He emerged convinced, however, that a new political direction was needed since the hard-core leftists he met in prison failed to talk openly about a Kurdish problem.

After his release, Ocalan continued his path to becoming a fulltime revolutionary, dedicating most of his time to theorizing and organizing. He rented a small apartment in the Bahçelievler district of Ankara with four friends who would later form the PKK with him. They gathered people every night to debate the Kurdish matter. It led to in 1973 what Ocalan called a “research group” on the future strategy for the Kurds (Marcus 2007:28).

In 1974 Ocalan joined the AYOD (Ankara Higher Education Association), a student organization that modeled itself on the Guevarist THKP-C (Turkish Popular Liberation Party-Front) (White 2000). Meetings here sharpened the divisions between the Turkish and Kurdish activists (Marcus 2007). The group was shut down in 1975, further convincing Ocalan that revolution could only be carried through illegal underground activities (Marcus 2007). Ocalan convened another meeting in the same year with fifteen others in the Dikmen section of Ankara. He and the others decided to give up their university studies and committed themselves full-time to the formation of a Marxist-

Leninist group dedicated to the liberation of the Kurdish southeast of Turkey through militant armed action.⁴⁴

According to Marcus (2007), the group formulated its official party program on New Year's Eve of 1977 with the twenty members of the inner circle at a house located in the Dikimevi suburb of Ankara during a two-night meeting. Imset (1992) writes that the formulation of the "Party program draft" occurred in the Bağcılar district of Diyarbakir in 1977. The draft according to the latter's account was widely distributed in Turkey under the title, *The Kurdish Revolutionary Path*. It was supposedly heavily influenced by the manifesto of the Turkish left with the similar title, *The Turkish Revolutionary Path*. The principles of the 1977 draft by Ocalan's group included calling for a Marxist-Leninist state in which "[t]he proletariat will be the pioneering force of the revolution" and "[t]he peasants will be the major force of the revolution" (quoted in Imset 1992:13).

1978 in Diyarbakir also marked the sharpening of the divisions between Ocalan's group and the more orthodox Marxist groups. Based on an account provided by a former militant (Imset 1992:15; see footnotes), a near direct confrontation with the group known as Revolutionary Path ended, what Imset called, the "ideological debates" with the Turkish Left. PKK also sought to quell opposition through the assassination of rivals, and "[s]oon, the rural areas of Southeast Turkey were almost totally deserted by left-wing

⁴⁴Ismet Imset's (1992) account differs from Marcus's here. The key moment, according to Imset, was a meeting in the Tuzluçayır district of Ankara in 1974 that took place with the Kurdish members of AYOD. Seven core colleagues took part in this meeting, leading to the formation of the UKO (the National Liberation Army), which was to constitute the "nucleus" of the later PKK. Ocalan formally declared at this meeting, the conditions for Kurdish national liberation movement were ripe and that their group would cut ties with the Turkish left. Further meetings were organized in cities of the Kurdish east/southeast: Gaziantep, Diyarbakir, and Elazig. The Dikmen meeting for Imset occurred in 1976.

organizations controlled from Ankara and Istanbul, and replaced by Ocalan's small-scale but relatively powerful forces" (Imset 1992:16-17). Thus, similar to the FLN case, the PKK found itself as the dominant force as other groups dissolved and retreated.

Violence also gave prestige to the group that would soon emerge officially as the PKK. On May 19, 1978 someone from the tribal *aga* (landowning) family of Suleymanlar killed a young militant known as Halil Cavgun in the town of Hilvan. According to Marcus (2007), Ocalan's group had a hard time initially getting support for a revenge attack from among the people of the region. The Suleymanlar were strong; they controlled the municipality and the police. Nevertheless, two key members of UKO carried out a successful hit against tribal leader Mehmet Baysal. This event led to open warfare in the town and its environs. The Suleymanlar had been politically tied to the ultra-right-wing MHP. UKO's willingness to violently confront the Suleymanlar, the only one among the various left-wing and separatist groups, won much support among the locals. A statement by Ramazan Ulek, a university student from a village near Hilvan who had established ties with the Ocalan-led group in 1977, illustrates the reason for this burgeoning support: "In my village, for example, everyone had a relative who had been beaten by the soldiers and the PKK was a stand against that. The PKK was also against the aghas...who would steal everything, even gold off a woman's neck" (Marcus 2007:45).

The fight against the Suleymanlar marked an immediate offensive tactic that the Ocalan group could engage in order to expand their popularity and escalate the armed movement. With it came the official formation of the PKK as an illegal political party that sought to establish its own army as a guerrilla force. In a secret meeting on Nov. 27-

28 1978 in the village Fış of Lice municipality, located in Diyarbakir province, the party officially recognized itself as the PKK (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*, in Kurdish), establishing in the process, *Serxwebun*, the party's official magazine.

With its strategy of bringing about a full-scale guerrilla war, the PKK carried out on July 30, 1979 an unsuccessful but brazen assassination attempt against Mehmet Celal Buçak, the tribal head of that powerful family and a parliament member of the conservative Justice Party. The Buçaks dominated the town of Şiverek and its satellite villages. The attack further escalated the violence in the region. But the pressures on the populace began to exhaust some of the support the PKK had won in the region, and clashes with rival Kurdish militant groups—such as the KUK (Kurdistan National Liberators)—also weakened it. With the massive clampdown that came with the military takeover of the Turkish state in 1980, the PKK leadership had to go into hiding abroad among the neighboring countries. It reemerged in 1984 among disaffected peasants following the repression of the coup.

4.5 Conclusion

I have tried to show in this chapter that Mexico and Turkey both failed to overcome the mediated structures of negotiated-intensive state building with which they entered the twentieth century. The political and social consequences have been considerable. New institutions of state—specifically, bureaucratic structures that promote reciprocity between state and society—did not develop. The failure of such “trust networks” to broaden allowed the political and social space for the EZLN and the PKK to grow in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan respectively starting in the 1970s and 80s.

In place of trust networks, the state allowed local oligarchies of power to dominate certain areas of Chiapas and Turkish-Kurdistan, thereby auctioning off measures of state autonomy for an increase in some measure of state capacity. In the former case, the Mexican state integrated local regional elites into the central party system in Soconusco, as well as in the central highlands, the area with the largest concentration of indigenous peasants. Lázaro Cárdenas' allies in Chiapas replaced the traditional Indian leadership in the highlands with a new generation of bilingual scribes who went on to serve the state party, the PRI. They came to dominate the regional economy along with the functions of local state institutions such as the INI and the schools. Similarly, the Turkish state allowed regional tribal families, such as the Buçaks and the Suleymanlar, along with other large landholding families and individuals in its Kurdish areas, to monopolize local economies and institutions. I will discuss this in more detail in the following chapter in order to highlight what types of villages and peasants participated in the PKK uprising.

As part of the legacy of state-negotiated state building, these oligarchies had state permission to maintain their own capacities for coercion in order to resist emerging challenges to their power. But they could not prevent the formation of new networks among the rural populations. These populations grew, shifted, and found political and militant organizations increasingly seeking to organize them in both Chiapas and Turkish-Kurdistan.

As Peter Evans (1995) argues, borrowing from Weberian principles, state-society synergy is fundamentally dependent on the state being able to impose a monopoly of violence. Both the revolutionary Mexican and Turkish states of the early twentieth

century did try to destroy or weaken those local elites of Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan that opposed their hegemony, but they did so by relying heavily on local elites that aided them. The loyalty of these local elites had always proven to be tenuous at best. Furthermore, the infrastructural limitations of the regions and the challenges of promoting economic development signified that state control continued to be a precarious reality. These factors gave way to non-mobilizational populist ideologies in the 1930s. Both Mexico and Turkey pushed a mainly discourse-oriented peasantist concept of national solidarity, rather than seek to orchestrate an interventionist and transformative process of industrialization.

Mexican statism in Chiapas, to be sure, did lead to a program of land reform, but this was selectively applied to the sub-regions where local elites had opposed the revolutionary state. Even in those areas, the weakness of the central state to carry out coherent policies led to some evasion of land redistribution. Land reform in Chiapas was also short-lived, ending or considerably slowing down by the mid-to-late 1940s. New policies designed to aid commercial agriculture came into place. Large landowners or *finqueros* established new alliances with the central state in the 1950s, solidifying their control over their landed estates in the highlands and the *finquero* zone located between Ocosingo, Altamirano, and Las Margaritas. Turkey never pushed through a large-scale program of land reform, and by 1929 it had even recognized the land titles (*tapu*) of the *agas* granted land during the Ottoman Empire.

The increasing reliance of Mexico and Turkey on powerful local elites led them to compromise their state autonomies. These elites came to control local institutions. Greater state support for commercial agriculture starting in the 1950s led to a sharpening

of intra-regional polarization as large landowners solidified their economic power and smallholders felt greater land pressures. Significant demographic shifts in the form of population growth and migration heightened competition over land. These tensions increasingly found expression as part of the growing left-wing movements, which formed networks throughout regions of focus here.

The EZLN and the PKK in the 1970s and 80s grew out of the organizational networks that had already come into place by previous leftist groups. Heightening levels of repression and the seeming capacity of the EZLN and the PKK to stand up to powerful interests and the state won them support from among their respective populations.

The following chapter focuses on identifying the mechanisms by which recruitment in the EZLN and the PKK grew in order to help answer the main questions posed in chapter one. It explores to what extent the further advent of capitalism (supposedly due to globalization) aided in the growth of both revolutionary movements, the kinds of villages that served as principle sources of recruitment, which peasants were the ones joining these movements, and how the various organizations, including the EZLN and the PKK themselves, influence the recruitment process.

Chapter V

Peasant Rebellions in the Age of Globalization

Wickham-Crowley (1992:169) writes, “The strength of the revolutionary challenges correlates inversely with the strength of party, military, government, and/or state institutions in those nations.” Considering the legacies of negotiated-intensive state building in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan, this statement requires some refinement. What we find in both the PKK and the EZLN cases are areas where the states and their allies could impose control and areas where they could not, places that could be designated as frontier areas or zones of conflict. The PKK and the EZLN were able to establish strength in these frontier zones where the states and their allies struggled to exert control. Consider the following two scenarios.

Take for instance the autobiographical novel by the former PKK militant Fevzi Yetkin, titled *Şah Köyü'nde Yaşamın Örüğü* (“The Unfolding of Life in Şah Village”) (2006), which he wrote while in prison. It describes how the village of Şah became a frontier zone in the late 1970s, where the *Apocu* (the early PKK) challenged the hegemony of the powerful tribal Buçak family, as this “dynasty” did not own the lands of the village. There, the PKK captured some agents working for the Buçaks, who then negotiated with the PKK for their release. As part of the negotiation, the PKK took the bold and unprecedented step of asking for weapons from the Buçaks. The four representatives of the Buçaks turned pale with shock. “This is because within the tribal tradition, weapons play a very important and fundamental role. Weapons ensure tribal authority over the population. Demanding weapons in any kind of agreement would mean that the tribe is surrendering its authority” (Yetkin 2006:89). The early PKK’s demand

for weapons amounted to a symbolic challenge to the dominance of the Buçaks, and by extension the Turkish state.

A similar situation emerged in the Lacandón Forest in 1977 in the community of La Nueva Providencia (see De Vos 2004[2002]). The neighboring *finquero* Polo Aguilar had been pressuring the community and slowly taking over its lands through peasant indebtedness. These tensions heightened as a small group of Jehova's Witnesses within the community refused to participate in the construction of a Catholic altar. They were expelled and migrated to the community of Emiliano Zapata. There, the group appealed to the peasant organization of Quiptic ta Lecubtesel for help. The organization convened a meeting in La Nueva Providencia to express support for the displaced religious group.

Polo Aguilar, seeing this as some kind of communist threat, flew in a small plane to Comitán the day after, on May 29, 1977. Eleven federal troops were sent for his and his family's protection. Polo Aguilar also hired some members of the paramilitary White Guards. The landowner with paramilitaries soon began to encroach further upon the lands of the peasants of La Nueva Providencia, harassing them and confiscating their livestock. Three peasants fled to Emiliano Zapata to inform the organization, which called an urgent meeting in San Quintín. A thousand peasants gathered for the meeting. Ta Lecubtesel planned for an attack against the soldiers, which they carried under the cover of darkness in the early morning of July 9. Only one of the eleven soldiers escaped with his life, along with the landowner and his son. The state, concerned, sought intelligence on the kinds of arms the peasant group had. The peasant leadership was mysteriously killed in the following months.

The early PKK and a precursor peasant organization to the EZLN, Quiptic ta Lecubtesel, both challenged the traditional basis of power in the region, which included the state for favoring and arming powerful families. But in linking of the two scenarios illustrated above, Tilly's concept of "multiple-sovereignty" comes to mind. It serves as the foundation for any revolutionary situation, in that "the incumbent governors no longer remain secure in their claims to rule. Instead, one or more new contenders emerge to challenge those claims," where the new contenders come to be seen as "authority" by a sector of the population which also comes to work for or serve the interests and directives of this challenging authority (Wickham-Crowley 1992:155).

Thinking about revolutionary situations arising from the two scenarios above brings us to the main research questions of this project, as drawn from Skocpol (1982) and others: How does the further penetration of capitalism in the countryside influence such uprisings? Related questions emerge here: Why did some villages or communities participate in the uprising while others did not, and what is their relationship to the larger capitalist economy? Consequently, which peasants among diverse rural populations are the ones supporting and joining revolutionary movements? Finally, what role do militant organizations play in the emergence of these movements?

The challenge in answering the questions above is that there are various types of villages and communities¹ within rural Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan that evince different degrees of integration within the larger structures of the economy,

¹ As already noted in Chapter I, Timothy Wickham-Crowley (1992:231) argues that the regions where first wave of (1950s-60s) and the second wave (1970s-80s) of Latin American revolutionary movements took place showed these characteristics: "(1) they had land-tenure structures featuring relatively high rates of sharecropping or squatting; (2) they had recent or long-term histories of assaults on the landed security of peasant cultivators; (3) they had long-term histories of resistance; and (4) they displayed social and cultural structures that provided revolutionaries with ready access to a sympathetic peasant population."

infrastructure, and politics, ranging from those that are relatively more integrated through influential local landlords and strongman to others that can be described as more isolated, largely alienated from state authority and institutions. Thus the internal administration of the latter villages have been more autonomous from the state and the larger structures, and alienation from state authority is an important feature, providing fertile ground for revolutionary counter-hegemonic organizations to operate, given the right conditions.

I argue in this chapter that capitalism in the countryside has not played a direct and primary role in the development of the EZLN and PKK insurgencies. Rather than villages where capitalist agricultural production dominated, it was more the smallholding villages that have been mobilized for rebellion. They have had the political and social space allowing for revolutionary activism to take place. Revolutionary groups became attractive for the peasant population as land pressures and rivalries among smallholders increased due to population growth within and between villages, and as insecure and weak central states augmented the tensions by taking sides and supporting certain groups—part of the legacy of negotiated-intensive state building. The states also became directly involved in violently repressing the populations of these villages. Back-and-forth migration to towns and cities for the peasants of these smallholding villages led rural migrants to participate in the political instability and the political organizations of the larger society. Upon returning to their villages, they then activated their village networks in support of the groups they had joined. These networks, already formed, aided in the process of insurgency mobilization.

In order to link the research questions, the common mechanisms by which peasants ended up joining or supporting the EZLN and the PKK are identified. Through

an analysis of their personal stories, we can see, for instance, to what extent capitalist exploitation or deprivation played a role, how the insurgency group itself established links to people, and how conflicts within villages might have made developing links to the EZLN and the PKK more meaningful and attractive. These stories also help provide a clearer picture as to who was joining these groups.

There are six identified common mechanisms by which peasants joined or mobilized on behalf of the movements. These mechanisms usually worked in combination with one another. They are: (1) search for new economic opportunity; (2) inter-peasant (local area conflict) or intra-village conflict; (3) the desire to escape the repression of village-based authority figures; (4) intra-family conflict; (5) the role of the insurgent organization or less-militant precursors in recruitment within the village; (6) leaving the village or community to attend schools in cities or towns.

The diversity of these mechanisms also tells us something about the organizational capacity of the PKK and the EZLN to recruit. Organizational capacity was greatly facilitated by the activities of precursor political organizations that broadened networks that the EZLN and the PKK could exploit, which by itself may not be all that unique in terms of comparison with peasant rebellions of previous eras. What does seem to be unique is that these networks, stemming from precursor groups, led to a more advanced degree of organizational sophistication. Both the EZLN and the PKK had elaborate setups whereby they could send young peasants to “academies” by the 1980s for extensive training and indoctrination at sites located in the central cities in the Mexican case or abroad in the Turkish-Kurdish case.

The discussion of the mechanisms of mobilization will follow the section on the role of “capitalist imperialism,” which includes focusing on the demographic and structural features of the villages and communities involved in the uprisings. These two sections will also help us to better clarify which peasants are the ones joining, which in turn will lead to the discussion of the role of militant political organizations.

5.1 Capitalist Expansion and Peasant-Based Revolts

Skocpol (1982) looks at the various arguments of the role of encroaching capitalism and concludes, “there is...room to doubt whether such commercialization is a necessary cause, or even an essential concomitant of peasant-based revolution” (370). She does so by referring to the historical record on China.

Skocpol indicates that northern China, where the communists had the greatest success establishing links with the peasantry, was relatively not any more commercialized than other parts of the country, nor had it experienced significant modernization. The hardships the peasants were facing from 1911 to 1949 had more to do with “huge” tax increases and threats to their physical well-being, the product of a serious civil war and the Japanese invasion of that period. The communists were successful in recruiting peasants to aid them in their struggle to capture state power, according to Skocpol, because they dealt with security and taxes, and because they changed the local political and social structure of peasant-landlord interactions. Consequently, “[i]n all of this there is no indication that increased agrarian commercialization—whether endogenously generated or due to imperialist penetration—was the decisive cause of peasant involvement in the Chinese Revolution” (371).

Perhaps a more fruitful debate emerges around the case of the 1979 Sandanista Revolution in Nicaragua. The Sandanistas provide an interesting case for comparison, as Nicaragua's principle cash crops have been both coffee, as in Chiapas, and cotton, as in Turkish Kurdistan and lowland Chiapas.

According to Paige (1985), coffee production in Nicaragua did not provide the basis of a revolutionary movement, as "capitalist transformations" did not take place in north-central Nicaragua (Segovia). Consequently, producers did not try to expropriate peasant lands. Instead, "The Nicaraguan mode of estate coffee production...most closely approached the manorial ideal: domain land worked by the landowners with a labor force more or less tied to the land" (Paige 1985:96), thus leading to "the stagnation of the coffee export economy...and created a politically stable social form" (98).

Rather, Paige sees the capitalist development of cotton production ("the great transformation") in Nicaragua since the 1950s as the cause of a great displacement of peasants to that country's northwestern towns and cities living in the peripheral shanties as a new kind of proletariat that migrated to the cotton-cultivating plantations for wage labor during times of harvest. They became a source of recruitment for the growing anti-Somoza Sandanista revolution in the 1970s.

Wickham-Crowley (1992:232-233) in his analysis of the Nicaraguan case finds that rural areas with a high proportion of squatters "provided special support for the FSLN guerrillas" in the 1970s, ultimately suggesting "a striking parallel to the Cuban revolution: the crucible of the revolution in each case lay within the squatter population in peripheral region of the country." Wickham-Crowley provides statistics that indicate

that the higher the percentage of farmers relative to wage-earning workers in a particular region, the higher the degree of guerrilla control.

So, what is the situation in Chiapas and Turkish-Kurdistan? Paige's analysis is relevant to the EZLN and the PKK cases. Carlos Tello Diaz (2005[1995]) pointed to (see Chapter IV) the early recruits for the FLN came from among the displaced peasants from the highlands who had settled in the periphery of San Cristóbal. Miguel, an ex-Zapatista I interviewed (February 4, 2007, San Cristóbal), was sent by the EZLN to San Cristóbal to recruit among the displaced indigenous peasants living in the city. Similarly, displaced Kurdish peasants who had settled the edges of the towns/cities of Turkey's southeast became a source of recruits for the PKK as the conflict wore on towards the start of the 1990s (Marcus 2007). One Kurdish villager I interviewed (November 1, 2006, London), Ilhan, worked for the PKK as a recruiter in Istanbul, after he fled his village in Şırnak province in 1991 from the attacking Turkish military which came in as reprisal for a PKK attack on the local police station.

Paige referred to the proletarianized peasants living in the edges of Nicaraguan cities as migratory estate laborers, as they would seasonally migrate to cotton plantations for work. Other forms of migratory-estate laborers also stand out. One respondent, Hectór (February 3, 2007, interviewed in an indigenous community of Las Margaritas municipality), was raised in an *ejido* but worked on the neighboring estate of a large landlord (*finquero*) in the municipality of Las Margaritas. He met up and trained with the EZLN in the early 1990s after having traveled to the interior of the Lacandón Forest to work for a lumber company.

But overall, the Zapatista and PKK cases are closer to the squatter experience, as argued by Wickham-Crowley (see also Whitmeyer & Hopcroft 1996). Both the EZLN and PKK insurgencies picked up in peasant areas that showed relatively low levels of agricultural commercialization. Peasant land holdings became increasingly tenuous mainly through demographic growth and competing interests, certainly requiring greater dependence on a money economy. A dynamic of greater repression and violence, however, served as the tipping point towards rebellion as peasant populations turned to the EZLN and the PKK in order to establish a new order (as, indeed, did the indigenous uprisings of the so-called Caste War and the Sheik Ubaydallah rebellion of the nineteenth century discussed in Chapter III).

5.1.1 Chiapas

The EZLN movement was centered in the Lacandón Forest, particularly in the environs of the municipality of Ocosingo. Tensions since the 1970s grew as a result of the governmental decrees that officially turned many of the settled communities that formed since the 1960s into squatters (see Chapter IV). The coastal region of Soconusco and the lowland valleys where capitalist farming for cash crops took place did not see any support for the EZLN. The highlands, which had the most concentrated indigenous population, many of who seasonally migrated to the lowlands and the coast to work on the plantations, saw only limited active support for the EZLN from among the more outlying communities further north. But why the Lacandón Forest as opposed to the highlands or the lowlands and coastal Soconusco?

Certainly, if a greater degree of capitalist transformation was key to the uprising, as argued by Paige, then we would have expected the rural laborers of the lowland and coastal areas joining and pushing the revolutionary struggle. There, unlike the Nicaraguan case, rural workers were allowed to organize into peasant organizations such as the National Peasant Confederation (CNC) and the National Workers Confederation (CTM). These were co-opted by the state in the form of the PRI, the long-standing ruling party. After the Revolution of 1910-1921, in a nod to land reform, plantation owners in the lowlands and Soconusco began renting plots of land to their laborers in an effort to hold on to the few available workers at the time (see Collier & Lowery Quaratiello 1999[1994]). The arrangement was similar to sharecropping; it was exploitative but allowed peasants to cultivate land independently, living with their families in their own homes.

Collier & Lowery Quaratiello (1999[1994]), describe the relationship between landlord and peasant in Soconusco and the Grijalva River valley as having undergone a transformation from master and servant to one of patron and client. Indeed, that patron-client form of interaction did allow for reciprocal benefits for peasants who belonged to the state-sponsored CNC in the form of credits. The peasant communities of the Lacandón Forest in large part did not belong to the CNC. By providing limited benefits, the landlords of Soconusco and the Grijalva River valley “continue to portray themselves as more progressive than landlords in other parts of the state” (Collier & Lowery Quaratiello 1999[1994]:31).

Héctor (interviewed February 3, 2007, municipality of Las Margaritas) spoke to me of his work experiences in the plantations of Soconusco, which, according to him,

were less oppressive than the wage labor at the landed estates of the Lacandón: “I never had problems while working in Soconusco. I did my job; they paid me and never gave me any problems. When I worked for the neighboring *finquero*, we were paid poorly and were often treated badly by the *mayordomo* [the *finquero*’s foreman].”

The state, however, was able to co-opt a few communities in the Lacandón Forest through the CNC, which only heightened the social divisions of this troubled sub-region of Chiapas. Three ejidal communities in the valley of San Quintín (see De Vos 2004[2002]) were officially given lands first in 1972 and again in 1981. Consequently, the inhabitants of these communities left the peasant organization Quiptic ta Lecubtesel and joined the CNC and the PRI, and thus never participated in the EZLN. The military, in fact, utilized San Quintín, following the January 1, 1994 Zapatista uprising, as a base to run its counter-insurgency operations. With the presence of the 1,000 strong troops, a considerable portion of the community now participates in a formal and informal commercial economy rather than cultivate their lands. Actually, a pattern emerges here; where the state is present in the form of institutions and organizations, that area tends to be more integrated into the commercial economy.

Capitalist transformation was less complete in the highlands as compared to the plantation economy of Soconusco, but certainly further along than in the Lacandón Forest. As noted in Chapter IV, the Mexican state established an institutional presence in the central highlands with the rise of the bilingual scribes to local power. These scribes became integrated into the national political party system as members of the PRI. They, of course, delivered votes for the central party and became an entrenched power. They also dominated government projects in the region through their control of state

institutions such as the INI and the local school system, ultimately enriching themselves with state funds and expanding their control over the regional economy.

As an oligarchic power, the scribes squeezed and exploited the growing peasant population. Although local agitation against the power of the scribes emerged in the late 1960s as in the Chamulan uprising in 1968, the scribes effectively expelled the agitators from their communities, muting potential threats to their power. Those expelled headed for the Lacandón Forest. Chapter IV provides statistics on the high rates of population growth in key municipalities of the Lacandón where the EZLN rose up—Ocosingo and Las Margaritas.

With the expansion of the oil industry since the 1970s, there has been considerable economic diversification of the highland economy towards more market-oriented activities (cash-crop agriculture of coffee and corn, wage-work in the areas of transportation, construction, and tourist-related areas) and away from subsistence-oriented agriculture. A factor here was the developing infrastructure (see Whitmeyer & Hopcroft 1996). The Pan-American Highway reached San Cristóbal by 1946 and Guatemala by way of Comitán in 1950. Paved roads progressively reached the various highland communities, although by 1994, the year of the uprising, this still was not complete. The Lacandón Forest lagged far behind in terms of agriculture and the diversity of market-oriented economic activities.

The peasants who wanted to escape oppression and landlessness had outlets such as the unsettled lands of the Lacandón Forest, creating communities consisting of smallholding subsistence cultivation. The peasants that joined the EZLN came from migrant communities that settled the forest since the 1960s. Consequently, “[o]f the

communities involved in the rebellion, it cannot be said that increasing capitalism is challenging customary patterns of village organization and village life, or that their members are being proletarianized” (Whitmeyer & Hopcroft: 519). Of the pioneers that went into the jungle to stake out new lands, their adolescent children have formed the “social base” for the EZLN (Leyva & Ascencio 2002 [1996]:22).

But these movements of peasants into the forest created a dynamic that did not exist in the highlands, or certainly in Soconusco. The forest turned into a region of conflict, of the kind that Paige termed, zero-sum—one of direct confrontations over land that had absolute winners and losers. It was this environment of increasing tension, of threats to physical safety—as violent dislocations of peasant settlements were taking place—that led the children of smallholding peasant families to join the armed EZLN movement, which was officially born in the forest on November 17, 1983. The EZLN could thus opportunistically present itself as a self-defense organization: “In Chiapas at least, it was born not as a guerrilla movement with a clear revolutionary strategy for taking power, but as a regional network of armed self-defense units” (Harvey 1998:165). Subcommander Marcos declared in february of 1994, “As far as the peasants are concerned, the EZLN arose as a self-defense group to defend the against the ranchers’ hired gunmen, who try to take their land and maltreat them” (quoted in Whitmeyer & Hopcroft 1996: 523). Miguel, a former EZLN operative whom I introduced above (interviewed February 4, 2007, San Cristóbal) described how his uncle was gunned-down by these hired gunmen in their forest community.

To be sure, we can see a correlation between where the EZLN had greatest strength and the number of confrontations taking place. According to stadistics provided

by Lopez Moya y Perez Robledo (1993) on agrarian conflict between 1989-1992 (which includes forced expulsion, land expropriation, and arrest), the municipality of Ocosingo—the geographical center of the EZLN—had the largest number of registered cases between 1989-1992 with eight (see Table 5.1). The principal agents of these conflicts were in general carried out through a combination of or an alliance between public-safety police (*policía de seguridad pública*) or judicial police (*policía judicial*) with landowners or ranchers against the indigenous communities and their peasant organizations. In Rio Florido, state-co-opted CNC peasants worked with the police to expel Tzeltal Indians of the Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization. As I argue, these events are the product of a weak state making alliances with third parties to impose control on suspect populations.

Table 5.1: Recorded Conflicts and their Principal Actors in the Municipality of Ocosingo, 1989-1992

	Action	Place	Author of Action	Affected
1	Land Expulsion	C, del Carmen	Public Safety & Judicial Police	Tzeltal Indians/OCEZ
2	Land Expulsion	N. Jerusalem	Public Safety Police & Landowner	Tzeltal Indians
3	Land Expulsion	Rio Florido	Public Safety & Judicial Police/CNC Militants	Tzeltal Indians/OCEZ
4	Land Expulsion	Predio Solidaridad	Landowners	Tzeltal Indians
5	Imprisonment	Nuevo Francisco Leon	Judicial Police/Landowner	Zoque Indians
6	Assassination	Rancho S. Antonio	??	Landowner
7	Land Expulsion	Mumunal	Landowner	Tzeltal/CNPI
8	Imprisonment	Abasolo	Judicial Police/Landowner	Tzeltal Indians

Source: Lopez Moya y Perez Robledo (1993)

As already noted in Chapter IV, population growth in Ocosingo was dramatic during the decades between 1970-1990, surpassing the rate of population growth of Chiapas as a whole (Harvey 1998). The need for peasants to clear more land directly conflicted with the interests of the private ranchers of Ocosingo. The productivity of the ranchers had been hampered by the inability of the state to provide credits, assist in

marketing—probably due to the lack of infrastructure (see also Migdal 1974)—and technical assistance (see Harvey 1998), a situation similar to Southeastern Anatolia (see Aydin 1986). Thus, because of weak institutions, the ranchers engaged in livestock raising with little capital investment and use of technology. The ranchers also argued that they suffered from a lack of land security, as the ideological basis of the revolutionary Mexican state had legitimized land invasions by peasants through land reform. Consequently, the ranchers sought to consistently increase pasturage for livestock, which put limitations on the clearing of the land for agriculture by smallholding peasants.

The above situation interacted with legal institutional factors that only added to the anxieties held by the peasant populations. The peasant communities such as in the Cañadas of Ocosingo had been struggling for legal recognition of their landholdings through the granting of land titles, without which landowners and other peasant groups could evict them. Indeed, the actions of government officials involved in the certification of the lands allotted to communities could foment conflict among peasants and communities. One member of the Indigenous Clandestine Revolutionary Committee describes the experience in their village during the early 1980s:

The officials would come, take the measurements, and then say that you need to pay me something. The people would then struggle to collect the money. But afterwards, the officials would go off and measure other lands, the *ejidos*, and they would set the boundaries close to the other *ejido* and they would want to cross the boundaries. That's how they would make it so that we poor indigenous peasants would fight amongst among ourselves, trying to take the land away from each other, even though it was the same official trying to take the land. He would go to some and say to them I'll recognize your lands, but you'll have to give me some. He would go to the other side as well, pressuring people one-by-one, never fixing anything. (Quoted in Rovira 1995:37)

Or state security agents would take sides among conflicted parties within communities raising the ire of the targeted party. The mayor of Altamirano, the municipality located between the troubled ones of Ocosingo and Las Margaritas, sent police to jail leading Catholics in the community of San Miguel Chibtik after this group expelled the Adventists. The mayor supported the Adventists because they were not party to the peasant organizations that the state found suspect within the Lacandón Forest. One of the prominent Catholic members of the community, Pedro, describes the situation that took place in the late 1980s:

They [the Adventists] had a lot of days of debt to the community, 120 days!, from when the *potreros* [communal grazing lands] were established. And they were indebted in terms of money also, [*sic*] they did not co-operate for the barbed wire, nor for any of the fiestas. This man Oscar really misbehaved. The community got angry and they [the Adventists] were almost going to get killed. But I calmed the people down, for by that time I already my *cargo* [position]. Then they left with their things. As the people saw that they had not destroyed their houses, they set these on fire. They did set them on fire, yes, but the people were already out then. (Quoted in van der Haar 2001:157)

San Miguel went on to support the EZLN.

The “[o]vercrowding and disputes over access to a dwindling land base created a growing sense of desperation, particularly among younger members of communities. For them, the reforms to Article 27 ended any hope gaining access to land” (Harvey 1998:192). The ranchers’ associations had applauded the reforms to Article 27 of the constitution when it was passed in 1992. It stripped indigenous peasants of their right to petition for land redistribution. The privatization push within the reforms also destabilized land rights, provoking greater divisions within peasant communities as village headmen (*caciques*) began buying up the land of poorer landholders (Harvey 1998; see also Collier & Quaratiello 1999 [1994]).

Furthermore, the government had imposed a ban in 1989 on timber exploitation in the forest, which included cutting trees for domestic use. The military was sent in to enforce the ban, which soon led to a wave of violence. Ultimately, this was the situation in the forest: The ranchers had built their political alliances with state authorities, utilized paramilitaries with impunity, and the state further utilized the military to attack peasant communities since the 1980s.

The political dynamics of the forest illustrated thus far lends weight to Wickham-Crowley's findings. The area showed a marked deficiency of commercialization, and in terms of capitalist penetration, the communities in the forest that formed the bases of support for the EZLN were the most marginalized and thus the least integrated in the official market. Commercialism and capitalism require an infrastructure and various kinds of institutions, ones developed and maintained by the state such as those that provide credits, technical assistance, aid in marketing of goods, which all entail a responsive bureaucracy.

The lack of a state presence in the aforementioned forms was key in the development of a revolutionary movement. A revolutionary activist and consultant for the organization Land and Liberty (*Tierra y Libertad*), Tere García, states for instance:

Our forces made their way to Chiapas because the Central Committee saw that the conditions in the southeast of the country were much better for creating social bases since geographic factors of marginalization, sensitive groups who were receptive to us, and another important factor that we did not see very clearly at the time: there was no state, which generated an auspicious environment for us to do our political work. (An interview with Marco Estrada 2007:317)

When the state tried to impose some controls on the communities of the Lacandón Forest, it amounted to harassment. In a collective interview, the people of *ejido* El Porvenir recounted:

It was Forest Protection who would come to screw us, especially when we were cultivating our fields, because they wanted to see how we were destroying the forest. They would then fine us a thousand or two thousand pesos. Sometimes they would bring the army because they wanted their money. That is how they would screw us (quoted in Estrada 2007:154)

This lack of a state presence among communities that were proliferating in the forest turned it into a zone of competition for different groups and organizations seeking dominance over these populations of villages and settlements consisting mainly of smallholding peasants. The competing organizations ranged from political parties, religious groups, peasant organizations, revolutionary movements, and paramilitaries allied with the state.

Nevertheless, shifts in the market, such as the drop in global coffee prices which afflicted Chiapas in 1989, certainly heightened the competition between and within communities and groups for resources, land, and influence, leading to greater possibilities for violence and potential for recruitment by revolutionary organizations.² Similar conditions were evident in the Turkish-Kurdish case which I will discuss below.

The situation in 1989 hurt the solidarity of the communities participating in the peasant organization known as Ejidal Union of the Forest. This is because the better quality of the coffee produced among the communities located in the higher parts of the Lacandón Forest received a better price for their product than those settlements of the lower parts of the forest where the quality of the coffee was not as good. Since the money coming in varied for each village, those that received less did not think it fair for an “ejidal union based on the principles of cooperation and solidarity” (Estrada 2007:358).

² Wickham-Crowley (1992) points out that “inter-communal” violence was significant in the Peruvian region of Ayacucho where the Shining Path or Sendero Luminoso was able to establish a strong base.

Certainly, a drop in prices sharpens the need for more land, as families, having dedicated a certain part of their plots for commercial crops, increasingly struggle to feed growing families. The impact was two-fold according to Estrada (2007) who studied the Tojolobal communities in the Cañadas of the Lacondón Forest. First, the EZLN was able to discredit peasant organizations as “governmental organizations” when distrust began to spread as a result of increased stress due to economic difficulties and a greater struggle for resources. The sense of rivalries heightened and Estrada (2007:362) writes that peasants felt a need “to settle accounts.” Secondly, the lack of land threatened the “material survival” of the young among peasant families, as well as their ability to become full and contributing members of the community (“*hombres cabales*”) (Estrada 2007:376). The need for a recognized social status led youth to seek varied positions within the armed movement of the EZLN. One of my respondents (Las Margaritas, January 7, 2008) stated that he joined the EZLN and moved to a rebel-held community because they provided him with a plot of land. Certainly, the deterioration of the economic conditions by the end of the 1980s interacted with the already tension-rife political, legal, and social conditions to increase the potential of a revolutionary uprising that came in full-force by 1994.

5.1.2 Turkish-Kurdistan

A Turkish soldier that served in Hakkari province fighting the PKK recounted in an interview, “I saw a lot of villages that helped the PKK and I saw a lot of villages that hated the PKK” (quoted in Mater 2005:100). As of yet, however, there has been no systematic analysis of the kinds of villages that have supported the PKK, considering the

significant variation among Kurdish villages in terms of social structure, economy, and topography.

Historically, we know that the PKK was able to find some support in 1978 when it started its war against the hegemonic Buçak family in the villages surrounding the town/city of Siverek and in the villages around Hilvan against the powerful Suleyman family. These town/cities were the power centers of the two families who were seeking to expand its economic and political control of the area, as many of the well-placed *agas* had been doing. The *agas* had strong incentives to expand their lands at the expense of peasants. One agricultural cooperative to which only large landholders belonged, the Çukobirlik for instance, required a minimum of five hectares (fifty *dönüms*) of land or proof of ten years of tenancy on the land cultivated; this cooperative provided higher purchasing prices than the market for strictly cash crops such as cotton (see Ertürk 1980).

We also know that the PKK strategically planned to start their war, based on the organization's declaration from the orders of the Central Committee in 1984, in the provinces of Hakkari, Van, and Siirt because, “[i]n this area the control of the enemy is weak compared to the north-west of Kurdistan [the western parts of Turkish Kurdistan], and its geography consists of mountains and rugged terrain...” Furthermore, “[a]mong the people, natural patriotism...is widespread and the masses are sympathetic to the idea of a struggle for their national liberation, and willing to participate in the resistance and support it...” (cited en Imset 1992:39). Correspondingly, the PKK launched its war on August 15, 1984 from the mountain villages around the city/towns of Eruh, of Siirt province, and Şemdinli in Hakkari province.

We also know from the account provided by a Turkish soldier (see Mater 2005:91-92) who survived the “thirty-three soldiers incident” which took place in the countryside near the town of Bingöl in 1993 that the PKK had full control of at least two villages in and around the mountains of the area. The soldier states that the PKK group that numbered forty or fifty took them [the soldiers] after having stopped their bus on the highway to a nearby village, where “[a]ll the women and the children in the village were watching us and were laughing.” They were then taken to another village in the mountains. Outside of the latter village the soldiers were shot execution style and left to die.

The above evidence indicates that the PKK established bases of support among more marginalized, geographically difficult villages where the the Turkish state and the large landowning *agas* were weaker. But the question is: structurally and economically, how are these villages different from the types of villages where *agas* were more dominant and the terrain less challenging? In order to answer this question we have to refer to the fieldwork research carried out by Ertürk (1980) in two villages (Ibrahimiye and Hacı Faris) in Mardin province, by Aydın (1986) in two villages (Kalhana and Gısgis) of Diyarbakir province, and by Karapınar (2005) in Sinan village also of Diyarbakir province. I will correlate the data I have collected in terms of the sociological backgrounds on those who have supported the PKK with the details provided in these fieldwork studies, which bring to light a typology of villages, in order to further our conclusions on the role of capitalist penetration.

There are two basic typologies of villages in Turkish-Kurdistan. The first is the more market-oriented village that focuses on the almost exclusive production of cash

crops of cotton and perhaps some wheat where landownership and political power in the area is concentrated in the hands of one or a very few landlords. The second is the village where smallholding still dominates. It has greater variation than the first in terms of both landholding size and types of crops cultivated, and local political power is not as concentrated in the hands of one or a few. In the latter style of village there is also greater class variation because there is a greater diversity in peasant households in terms of landholdings, varieties of cultivation, family size, livestock ownership, and assorted combinations of land cultivation and other types of economic activities such as seasonal migrant labor. Landlessness does not mean that the peasant household has no land, but that the land they do have is not sufficient to sustain the family, and according to Aydin (1986) this comes to about five hectares or less. The market-oriented villages usually specialize in a single cash crop and have fewer and more rigid class distinctions where the large landlord oversees sharecroppers or renters and perhaps some laborers working for him.

These basic typologies roughly correspond to those of Chiapas. The smallholding village parallels the ejidal community of the Lacandón Forest, where land was essentially privatized, and where variation in household wealth depended on the size of the household, quality of land, quantity of livestock, along with any kind of household diversification of economic activities. There were also the *avecindados* of the ejidal community of those who did not hold property rights in the community (see van der Haar 2001). These could be the sons of those who did but could not inherit property as this was limited, or later settlers of the community.

The *caciques*, *finqueros*, and ranchers of the highlands and the areas abutting the Lacandón Forest dominate the economy and political life of the communities associated with them, reflecting more market-oriented class relations of sharecropping (Zinacantán and Chamula of the central highlands), tenant farming (the *fincas* or haciendas), and migratory laborer type (ranches) of arrangements. In the smallholding villages of the Lacandón Forest the power structure is more evenly shared. Soconusco, similar to the large cotton plantations of Turkish Kurdistan, consist of the large plantations devoted to a single cash-crop such as coffee, and this type of structure is also more fully integrated into the global economy. In the Turkish-Kurdistan case, there are, however, greater intermediate types between the extremes, as legally sanctioned types of landholding structures such as the ejidos have not been legally enforced or favored during the republican era.

What is clear is that the more market-oriented villages sit on favorable geographic settings of low-lying wide plains as in the case of Ibrahimiye, Kalhani, and Sinan villages. These villages concentrate mainly or even almost exclusively on cotton production which requires a highly centralized system of control and planning. Political, economic, and social control of the villages is heavily concentrated in the hands of one *aga* in the case of Ibrahimiye and Sinan villages, while in Kalhana there are two powerful landlords. Peasants become highly dependent on the landlord for all their subsistence needs, essentially taking on the form of a landless mass working as sharecroppers³ as in Sinan village until the end of the 1970s. By the start of the 1980s the sharecroppers of

³ Since landlord control over labor may subsume the whole peasant household in terms of the various kinds of services rendered to the landlord, it is difficult to differentiate wage labor from sharecropping or corvée labor (Aydin 1986). This is another example of the kind of dependency the *aga* has fostered over the lives of the peasants, controlling all forms of income and consumption goods in the form of in-kind payments combined with wage payments.

Sinan were becoming renters. The landlord began shifting the whole burden of the risk of production on to the peasant sharecropper, or removing the sharecroppers altogether, as in Nicaragua, and increasingly turning cultivation over to (migratory) wage laborers in the form of peasants from surrounding villages or nearby town/city, as in the case of Kalhana and Ibrahimiyé.

Absolute control over the social, political, and economic life of the villages of Ibrahimiyé, Kalhana, and Sinan allowed for few social spaces in which rival political movements could effectively emerge. The *agas* of these three villages were closely affiliated with state-sponsored projects and institutions in the area and were thus heavily invested in maintaining the order of planned development. The *agas* of all three villages used their access to state-provided agricultural credits to expand the lands they brought under cultivation through mechanization, putting in place money-lending practices to further indebt peasants. Through the assistance of the state, they also established extensive irrigation networks.⁴

The institutional links between the state and the *agas*, as indicated in the previous chapter, included the latter's control of political party organization in the towns and cities of the region in the hands of the latter. The Buçak family could guarantee 8,000 votes for their party (McDowell 1996). Dependency on the *aga* led to a strong sense of obligation

⁴For example, the landlord of Sinan directly benefitted from the government's GAP (the Southeast Anatolia Project for developing hydro-electric dams) since 1981. GAP allowed for the dramatic increase in the size of irrigated lands by 2003 as well as the gross agricultural output. GAP changed the landlord's relationship with the peasants. He began renting out irrigated land to them as the production of the higher-value cash crop of cotton required labor-intensive structure of small-scale family production. Moving from a sharecropping arrangement based on the production of dry cereals to a rental-based system of irrigated cash crops meant that the landlord shifted the risk of production to the peasant.

The *aga* of Ibrahimiyé, as another example, owned shares in some of the state-initiated industries, renting some of his land for a prototype sugarbeet factory, and had access to state-provided agricultural credits that helped him turn the village to one of the "most-mechanized" in Mardin.

and resignation on the part of the villagers. As one tractor driver working for the landlord of Ibrahimiye explained it:

Most of the villagers are for RPP. We know that this party is the only one concerned with the problems of the poor and the landless but what can we do? Our *aga* is good to us and his all we have got. What would become of us if he were to kick us out of his village? The least we could do is to vote for his party. (quoted in Ertürk 1980:118)

It was this kind of power that allowed the landlord of Ibrahimiye to arm his employees and send them to another region in order to forcefully expell Yezidi Kurds from 600 hectares of land they had been claiming as their own for subsistence-level food production. Because of the power of the large *aga* as the sole provider of employment and other goods and services, he could demand various kinds of services in return from dependent villagers. The capacity of the landlord to provide benefits could also be the cause of competition (see also Popkin 1979) among the peasants for those services, hindering the formation of a united opposition to his power. In Sinan village, the landlord continued sharecropping arrangements with “trouble-free” families rather than displace them with mechanization and land enclosures (Karapinar:181).

Opposition could only emanate, as implied in Ertürk’s (1980) analysis, from more independent or autonomous small-holding villages. These villages had organized a boycott of the elections in the late 1970s. The beholden residents of Ibrahimiye did not. In comparison with the mountainous village of Hacı Faris, Ertürk writes (1980:126), because of the concentration of power in Ibrahimiye, “It was found that in the economically more developed of the two villages participation opportunities are more limited and selective, whereas in Hacı Faris, alternative sources of influence seem to be emerging.” Sinan village’s structural similarities to that of Ibrahimiye perhaps accounts

for why its peasants did not join the PKK and “never attempted to challenge the state” (Karapinar:189). Instead they have moved within the legal framework of the state to challenge the landlord, starting relatively late in 2004. The Sinan village case, in effect, also refutes the moral economy argument for the growth of armed insurgencies.

Small-holding villages have more fluid social existences which are less structured by a singular mechanism of production and authority. The needs of agricultural production are not focused on a singular crop. Haci Faris had 99% of its lands reserved for cereal production of various kinds on unirrigated fields. Part of the economy also depended on illegal cross-border tobacco smuggling with Syria in order to support their small-scale agriculture. Gisgis’ lands were dedicated to various forms of cultivation including vineyards, vegetable gardens, and orchards. Haci Faris had an *aga*, but since there were other landowning families, his control over the decision-making processes of the village was not absolute.

“Alternative forces of influence” (Ertürk:132-133) were at play in Haci Faris, including the teacher who brought a “radical” perspective towards the dominant *aga* class and promoted an independent organizational space in the village. In Ibrahimiye, the *aga* had the power to expell a teacher with radical views. The structure of Haci Faris, located in the hills of the Gurs Mountains, lends itself to a more extensive community life, as houses are clustered on top of each other on slopes. Haci Faris also lacked a *köy odası* (village room), a central building/location where the decisions of the village are taken, an institution that is exclusively controlled and financed by the *aga*, and serves to reinforce his status. This institution existed in Ibrahimiye.

Life in Hacı Faris was simply less centrally organized, including its religious life, as a structured-orthodox religion did not exist as much as informal practices of Islam. A more communal and less centrally-controlled existence was also evident in the hilly and stony grounds of the more small-holding village of Gisgis as compared to Kalhana. Eighteen of my twenty-two (18 of 22) respondents in the Kurdish case whose villages were at the center of the conflict spoke of mutual-help practices in their communities. Few spoke of their villages being controlled by a powerful *aga*. Gisgis had two shops, two coffeehouses, a school, and health center (albeit not staffed), leading to greater free-flowing interaction between residents free from any central economic and political interest, while Kalhana did not have shops, coffeehouses, a school, a mosque, or even clear-cut streets.

Life in Gisgis, therefore, was more varied in terms of occupation. Occupations, and life in general, in Kalhana was organized around the interests of the *aga*. Consequently, because of the social variation and fluid forms of social interaction, the more smallholding villages became the places where rival and counterhegemonic movements had the space to mobilize and organize a fight. Social variation and less centrally controlled spaces became the places where rivalries could play out in the form that Popkin (1979) illustrated in his study on Vietnam. The smallholding village of Turkish Kurdistan thus strongly parallels the social and political life in the rebel communities of the Lacandón Forest.

Seasonal workers that migrated out of Gisgis never cut ties with their village. This is because land ownership was more prevalent (3.24 hectares per household), providing

some security of subsistence.⁵ Since wage-relations had not developed as extensively in small-holding villages, many from the peasant households may be employed outside. 45% of heads of households of Haci Faris, for instance, were employed on the outside, certainly affording the possibility of getting involved in the larger political crises of the country and then bringing them back to the village. Many of my respondents spoke of this back-and-forth migration to their village due to work—such as to cities for employment in construction or migratory-estate labor to large cotton plantations in the Çukurova region near Adana—and school. Few had to deal with powerful *agas* in their villages. One (interviewed: September 25, 2006, Istanbul) spoke of an authoritarian *aga/imam* in his village in Diyarbakir province. In that case, the whole household permanently migrated to the city of Batman.

Migration from more capitalist-oriented villages like Sinan village tended to be more permanent rather than seasonal. Karapinar (2005:181) notes that from his fieldwork census of 2003, there were 1,138 people living in 146 households in the village. Based on previous surveys, there were 1,000 people living in the village in 1981 with 105 households. Karapinar estimates that 600-700 people had migrated out of the village in two decades. Certainly, once settled in the nearby cities, as in the Paige model of the Sandanista movement, they could become a potential social base for PKK recruitment. According to Karapinar, however, nobody from Sinan had joined the PKK.

The hard data on those who joined or have been affiliated (or suspected of affiliation) with the PKK reflect greater peasant backgrounds as opposed to greater

⁵ Aydin (1986:117) notes that a majority of the households in Gisgis (133 out of 164) owned five hectares of land or less, and these were considered smallholders due to low levels of productivity and the type of agriculture. These households, then, became increasingly unable to sustain themselves through agriculture alone, leading their members to supplement their incomes elsewhere.

proletariat backgrounds of the Paige thesis, thus providing support for both Skocpol and Wickham-Crowley's conclusions. If further penetration of market forces and the concomitant greater exploitation of poor peasants or agrarian cultivators in export enclaves were the primary factors, then we would have to expect less variation in the social backgrounds among the peasants joining insurgencies. They would all have been sharecroppers, migratory estate laborers, or renters as in the case of Sinan village. The social class indicator among the 37 PKK insurgents, as seen in table 5.2,⁶ shows significant variation, with 13 of the 33 whose social class were identified coming from "middle" or better conditions, and only three of the insurgents were identified as rural laborers.

Table 5.2: Social Profile of PKK Insurgents

	Gender	Year of Birth	Social Class	Place of Birth	Level of Education	Marital Status/ Kids	Age Recruited
1	male	1965	well off	Berecuk	some middle-school	No	24
2	male	1966	Poor	A village in Sirnak	None	No	???
3	male	1965	Poor	Karakocan-Isabey village	None	No	25
4	male	1957	Poor	Saygin village	Primary	Yes	22
5	male	1962	Poor	Nisebin-Durakbas village	high school	Yes	23
6	male	1962	Poor	Bezarcix-Igdeli village	Primary	No	28
7	male	1972	Poor	Heweng-Bozova	high school	No	16
8	male	1970	Poor	Pirsus, Golen village	high school	No	20
9	male	1961	?	Varto, Covsan village	middle school	No	18
10	female	?	Poor	Menikan village, Dersim	none (?)	No	?
11	female	?	Poor	?	None	Yes-married	?
12	female	1972	well off	Birecik-Urfa	some university	No	20
13	male	?	?	Pazarcik-Armutlu village	?	No	?
14	female	1961	middle	Sorgutlu village, Pazarcik	?	Yes-married	24
15	male	1972	middle	Aralik Kovasi, Pazarcik	Primary	No	18
16	male	1973	well off	Diyarbakir	Primary	No	18
17	female	1968	middle	Elbistan-Sevdilli village	some university	No	22
18	male	?	Poor	Paliye-Zuver village	some high school	No	pre-18
19	male	1967	middle	Gire Sor	some university	No	19

⁶ The information presented here is based on biographical sketches of fallen insurgents from the PKK publication *Serxwebûn*, which is published in Germany in the Turkish language.

20	male	1959	Poor	Apika village, Batman	some university	No	17
21	male	1962	Poor	Alican village	some middle-school	No	22
22	male	1973	well off	Ercis village	some high school	No	17
23	male	1975	middle	Silopi Kabgo village	None	No	16
24	male	1971	??	Muradiye	some university	No	21
25	male	1970	Poor	Beytussebap	None	No	18
26	male	1975	middle	Zengan village, Kerboran	Primary	No	16
27	male	1975	Poor	Bingol-Sirnan village	Primary	No	18
28	male	?	middle	Mazidagi, Mardin	high school	No	pre-18
29	male	1967	Working class	Kristikali village, Elbistan	Primary	No	23
30	male	1972	?	Van	high school	No	19
31	female	1969	Merchant family	Diyarbakir	University	No	23
32	male	1965	Poor	Pazarcik-Salmanipek village	University	No	24
33	male	1975	working class	Eruh-Kuxu village	some primary	No	16
34	female	1970	working class	Corum-Iskilip	University	No	20
35	male	1976	middle	Pazarcik-Cimikan	middle school	No	17
36	male	1976	working class	Catak	some primary school	No	16
37	female	1975	well off (feudal)	Onsus village, Tatvan-Bitlis	Primary	No	17

Source: *Serxwebûn* (PKK publication). 4/1992:7-9; 3/1993:15-21; 1/1992:16-22; 4/1994:23-26; 12/1994:23-25; 1/1995:8-12; 2/1995:21-22.

Further evidence on the varied social backgrounds of the peasants caught up in the conflict is provided by a report published by the non-governmental organization (NGO) known as The Migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture (GÖC-DER) (1999-2001). At the height of the conflict in the 1990s, the Turkish state initiated a program to destroy the logistical bases of support for the PKK by razing or burning villages in the country's southeast, a classic strategy of counterinsurgency. By all accounts this turned out to be successful in quelling the strength of the movement. The Turkish state deliberately targeted certain types of villages: "When they [Turkish soldiers] burned villages, and lots of villagers were killed, things started to turn bad for us," (quoted in Marcus 2007:186) noted one ex-PKK militant, Küçük Zeki.

GÖC-DER carried out surveys with the migrants of forced displacement in their various destination cities, namely Diyarbakir, Batman, Van, Istanbul, Izmir, and Icel.

According to the findings of the organization's survey (N=2139), 87.1% of the households whose members were forcefully displaced were from villages or hamlets and based their living on agriculture. Of these, 33.3% were classified as "middle-sized peasantry," 17% as "poor peasantry," 16.2% as "minor peasantry," 8% as "rich peasantry," and 20.3% as "agricultural laborer without land" (GÖC-DER 1999-2001:38). Thus a considerable majority of the rural displaced (75%), who constituted the vast majority of all displaced (87.1%), were from varied "peasant" backgrounds as opposed to a more proletarianized background of "laborer."

What could induce a wider cross-section of peasants to join a struggle? Threats to physical security due to conflicts over land and state-sponsored repression of mainly smallholding peasants of various land and household sizes, and the mobilization of the children of such households by the organized EZLN and PKK movements are more direct factors. In Turkey as in Chiapas, several of the people I interviewed spoke of having experienced intra-communal or intra-village conflicts in the form of "blood feuds" or inter-tribal, inter-clan, conflicts. Such conflicts are primarily about defending the honor of the family. This type of violence often involved a continued cycle of revenge, which could sweep up any member of the household. Marcus (2007:116) gives credibility to one "experts" assessment of the situation: "The PKK has exploited this crooked tradition [blood feuds] to its best."⁷ Furthermore, there could be strong incentives for feuds over land.

⁷Wickham-Crowley (1992:143-146) gives credence to the role this type of violence plays in the mobilization of peasants for guerrilla warfare. Confrontations between families, the "Hatfield-McCoy type of feud" seems to have provided amenable conditions for guerrilla movements to grow in Venezuela from 1959-1969 and in Colombia during the 1960s in FARC-controlled areas.

About a third of the PKK insurgents (12 of 37) experienced intra-village or local area conflict (see table 5.3). One of my respondents, who was an official of the now-defunct Democratic Society Party (DTP), itself the product of the evolution of the PKK movement (see Özcan 2006), recounts how his entire family was forced out of their village and into the town of Idil in the province of Şırnak during the late 1970s. The story sounds eerily similar to the events that occurred in the Zapatista community of San Miguel Cibtik of the 1980s recounted above:

All my grandfather's children moved. When moving to Idil, all the individuals of the family such as my grandfather's siblings who had the last name moved to other villages because our other relatives, more distant relatives, were imposing on our land. There were also one or two peripheral villages...that were attacked...we had a small farm. My father got involved in a fight...in which one person got killed. This led to soldiers stepping in and clamping down. This is why my father left the village. I remember it well; the sounds of that day are still in my ear. They burned the village and our farm. My family was there with our relatives. My mother with my aunts, my uncles' wives, my uncles were held up in a house. Someone said let's burn this place as well. Another said that there are women and children in that house, how can you set it on flames. But hundreds of animals perished, burned. We moved to Idil as an entire family. (September 19, 2006, Istanbul)

Cemal (b. 1960), another respondent (September 29, 2006, Iki Telli, Istanbul), told me that his father sent him away from their village in Siirt province to Ankara when he was fifteen years old for fear that the land dispute with their neighbors could escalate into open violence and that he, a brazen youngster, would become a target for retaliation. He established links with the PKK in the notorious Diyarbakir prison where he was transferred to a month after his arrest. Before his time in prison, Cemal told me he had never heard of the PKK. Marcus' (2007) interviews, as well as my own, confirm that the PKK were particularly active and organized when it came to recruiting in Diyarbakir prison through the 1980s. Cemal was arrested having returned to the

Table 5.3: Experience with Intra-Village or Local Area Conflict

	Gender	Experience of intra-village or local area conflict
1	male	Yes (blood feud)
2	male	Yes (inter-tribal, collaborating brigand)
3	male	Yes (sectarian Alevi-Sunni)
4	male	No
5	male	No
6	male	No
7	male	No
8	male	No
9	male	No (yes, after being recruited)
10	female	No (seems strong village solidarity)
11	female	Yes (blood feuds)
12	female	No
13	male	No
14	female	No
15	male	No
16	male	No
17	female	No
18	male	No (but place of origin is fascist w/Islamist movement)
19	male	Yes ("feudal collaborators")
20	male	No
21	male	No
22	male	Yes (tribal blood feuds)
23	male	No
24	male	??
25	male	Yes (level of banditry high in his area & he fought this)
26	male	Yes (mention of bandits)
27	male	No
28	male	No
29	male	No
30	male	No
31	female	No
32	male	No
33	male	Yes (state recruits relatives in village)
34	female	No
35	male	No
36	male	Yes (blood feud forcing them to leave native village; also fights collaborationist "gangs")
37	female	No

Source: *Serxwebûn* (PKK publication). 4/1992:7-9; 3/1993:15-21; 1/1992:16-22; 4/1994:23-26; 12/1994:23-25; 1/1995:8-12; 2/1995:21-22.

southeast in early September of 1984 for work in constructing a police station. The PKK's open war against the state had started the month prior and he was detained when his bus out of Cizre was stopped by the gendarme (rural police). He was accused of participating in the militant organization's attack in Eruh. I asked Cemal to explain the dispute his family had with the neighbors over the boundaries of their property. For instance, did the land title not indicate the size of their property and its boundaries? Cemal responded that it did, but he did not make it clear as to why or how the other household could claim that their "property ended there, not here."

The dispute above makes sense, however, if we consider that land enclosures and land grabs often took place outside of the purview of the state, and the extent of land ownership was often deliberately hidden from the state. This, in effect, created a dynamic similar to the situation of the "squatters" in the Lacandón Forest and in the various Latin American countries that Wickham-Crowley studied. Disputes over land titles and ownership emerged. Aydin (1986:115) notes that according to the tax office 2,696 *dönums* (or 269.6 hectares) of land existed in Gisgis, while his own fieldwork indicated that the village contained 5,306 *dönums* (530.6 hectares) or almost twice the official amount. The purpose was to avoid paying taxes, and the villagers often gave Aydin the same land ownership figures as they gave the state. The peasants had been clearing the land on the slopes of the mountains adjacent to their village.

The PKK, in order to begin mobilizing peasants after their arrival in the region in 1978, intervened in the "blood" feuds in order to win followers. In some cases they took sides, and in others they tried to negotiate solutions. They also offered their services to important families and local politicians in the Urfa region (McDowall 1996). The state

became more actively involved in these divisions by strengthening its support of certain families in the area. Prime Minister Demirel, for example, in 1979 took actions against those who were challenging the power of the oppressive large-landholding Buçak family in the town of Siverek and its satellite villages. Such actions heightened conflict and helped the PKK build some popularity. As the full-blown war picked up after 1984, the state created further division among the local populace by instituting the village guard system in 1985. Certain villagers were armed and salaried certain as security agents against the PKK. Some of these village guards, in turn, used their coercive power to dispossess peasants of their land (McDowall 1996), or had taken over lands of those dispossessed by the military (see also Bird 2004).

But the greatest levels of repression came directly from the state and its security forces. Since 1982 and with Law 2932 introduced in 1983, the state imposed severe linguistic and cultural restrictions in order to stem any possibility of separatist activities. But the state's own actions only fueled opposition. According to McDowall (1996:425), "State oppression was most overwhelming and pervasive in the field of physical abuse and torture." McDowall goes on to quote a peasant who states, "I was ready to confess that I had killed one hundred men, because they brought my wife and sister, stripped and threatened to rape them right there." Just about all my respondents' accounts of events in the villages can attest to such high levels of abuse.

But is capitalist commercialization directly responsible for the increases in intra-village and local area violence and state oppression? A more direct role is played by population growth inducing land pressures, sparking insecurity within the household in meeting the needs of growing families. Increased peasant mobility opened the door for

greater social mobilization—the breaking down of old social ties and commitments and to the formation of new ones. There is evidence to show that the less economically integrated villages suffered greater population pressures. In Ibrahimiye the average number of persons per room was 2.8, while in Hacı Faris it was 3.2. 67% of the households in Hacı Faris consisted of dwellings of two rooms or less, while 55% of the households in Ibrahimiye did so (Ertürk 1980:155). The population index in Gisgis and Kalhana both showed dramatic increases between 1955 and 1975, but by 1977 Kalhana's population decreased with more permanent out-migration, while the smallholding Gisgis kept growing in 1977 (Aydin 1986:78-83).

Increasingly, people of the more smallholding villages had to look for employment externally in order to meet the subsistence of their households. Such pressures, in combination with increased activism of political and military organizations, and the willingness of the state to utilize or support those elements willing to use indiscriminate violence against peasants, unleashed a concatenation of events that led to a further spiraling of tensions.⁸

The same party official quoted above explained to me that the feuds taking place in and around his village of Idil municipality had to do with the competition spurred by the economic shortages in the 1970s and the greater population density in the area:

To say the truth, the fight in our village was about that [economic competition]. Thinking about it, [our village was] the most successful village over time—the tribe's most successful village with the most abundant land. It has 21 fields; there's water and cultivation, everything. With time, the villages around it grew with groups of people who stopped going to summer pastures who, as they got drawn to settling and working the land, inevitably began to challenge the land boundaries, and began trying to seize their neighbor's land, even if you had the land titles proving it was yours. There was agitation. There was killing. I don't

⁸ A reference was already made (see Chapter IV) to the car accident (1996) of Sedat Buçak, a member of parliament and the powerful Buçak family, which revealed his ties to a paramilitary force.

know...you plant a field, and in the spring a man comes with thousands of sheep passing through it. This was the situation from the 1970s onward. (September 19, 2006, Istanbul)

The respondent went on to explain how the state fomented these conflicts. Again, the story similar to the situation in the Lacandón Forest of Chiapas as noted above:

Now...for example, between two villages there's a conflict. Instead of be preventing this, the state would bring troops and they would go to one of the villages...and collect a lot of money...by accusing them with a crime. Then they would go to the other village and do the same thing. [Since it was lucrative] They would have the two villages fight against one another. This is how it was. (September 19, 2006, Istanbul)

The PKK successfully situated itself within the spaces of heightened tensions. Land inequality only worsened between 1980 and 1991 as the war between the state and the PKK heightened, whereby at the end of this period half the population owned only six percent of the land.

Population growth and land pressures correlate strongly with urbanization in the region, with southeastern Anatolia showing the highest rates of regional out-migration from rural to urban in the country (Karapinar 2005). The PKK was able to recruit among the mobile peasantry (discussed below), similar to the argument that Paige made of the Sandanista movement in Nicaragua. In 1980 sixty percent of the population in the region was rural. This dropped to forty-four percent by 2000.

There are important similarities between Siverek, Hilvan and Ocosingo. Increased land pressures and competition due to high rates of population growth, combined with increased state repression, and the participation of certain local-area actors in this repression, helped the PKK and the EZLN find supporters among the villages and communities that had the social and political space to accommodate them. These were the

smallholding villages where commercial and capitalist penetration was limited. The greater rate of migrations and peasant mobility, combined with greater internal divisions between peasant households, also indicate that communal solidarity of autonomous villages had lost some significance as factors behind peasant mobilization.

Finally, the two cases confirm Skocpol's conclusions as to the effects of capitalism on rural society, "as a propellant of changing relations between states and classes, than...as an agent of commercialization and market penetration" (372). The move towards capitalist restructuring by underdeveloped states has played a role, but mainly long-term, in effecting social and demographic changes. Physical insecurity and the mobility of peasants, along with the engagement of the militant organizations in organizing them, were the more direct causal factors promoting the growth of the PKK and the EZLN. Wickham-Crowley's (1992) own studies confirm this. By having indicated the more direct structural factors we can now move on to identifying the common mechanisms of shifting political identities that led individual peasants to join the EZLN and the PKK.

5.2 Mechanisms of Shifting Political Identities

In the first chapter I outlined my approach to understanding the mechanisms of shifting political identities. The identification of these mechanisms will help us link the various levels of analysis needed to answer the main research questions. For example, the structural tensions—growing demographic pressures, increased land competition, greater levels of state repression, etc.—observed in our analysis of the role of greater capitalist intrusion set the stage for the key events that affected the lives of those who joined these

movements. These events, in turn, constitute the mechanisms of mobilization. These mechanisms will have more commonly affected a particular class of peasants, helping us to also clarify which peasants were the ones who joined these movements. The mechanisms can also shed light on the role of the militant organizations that might exploit certain events in attracting people to their group.

The identification of the mechanisms of mobilization is also about moving beyond static and fixed classifications such as “conservative” and “radical” in order to focus on the changing nature of routinized patterns of social interaction. Alterations in the relational, collective aspects of peoples’ lives will help us explain where and how new (political) identities form. In order to better understand the process by which movements such as the EZLN and the PKK grow, it is necessary to identify the mechanisms by which peasants, who are swept up by the changes afflicting their political and social institutional contexts, join them.

To reiterate, I am using Migdal’s definition of “social mobilization,” which is “the breaking down of old social, psychological, and economic commitments” (1974:13). Therefore, the mechanisms by which political identities shift has to do with the formation of new social networks as older solidarities breakdown. The example provided in Chapter I refers to younger members of peasant households leaving seasonally for temporary labor opportunities outside of the village, opening the door to new social connections and solidarities which well-organized and sympathetic movements such as the EZLN and the PKK could exploit.

My research points to that in addition to the (1) search for new economic opportunity,⁹ there are yet other common mechanisms. These are: (2) inter-peasant (local area conflict) or intra-village conflict—due to demographic factors such as population growth, or state repression, and/or third party actors, such as paramilitary groups, who foment conflict; (3) the desire to escape the repression of village-based authority figures; (4) intra-family conflict; (5) the role of the insurgent organization or less-militant precursors in recruitment within the village; (6) leaving the village or community to attend schools in cities or towns (because of the dearth of schools in villages) where psychological displacement from the village and family solidifies and where organized political movements sweep up young peasants. These mechanisms often work in combination leading to the formation or solidification of new social networks.

The combination of mechanisms one and five are evident in the interview with Major Rolando (age 35 at the time of the interview) of the EZLN who arrived in the Lacandón forest as a militant around 1987:

I hail from peasant parents. I lived in a typical Chiapan village, working in the fields cultivating maize and beans in order to survive. I have seven siblings, and this was not enough to survive on, and on the side you had to work to get the money to buy the essentials. You would go to ranches, large haciendas, go to the grazing land and begin to clean.

I have never belonged to a political party. When I joined the Zapatista Army I was working somewhere else, not at home. I lived for seven years in the city. I was a helper in construction work. You don't have any other training, nor do you have an opportunity for better work; they ask for education and you don't have any.

I came to know a beautiful city, and there I met a person who began to talk to me of the need to organize as a group and see and study what is going on in our country, above all to what is happening to our peasantry, which is what affects you most directly. Soon the opportunity arose. They invited me to this struggle, and you accept without hesitation. (Quoted in Rovira 1995:63)

⁹This opportunity can come in a variety of forms such as the proximity of a cross-border black market, organized crime, transnational labor market, etc.

Mechanisms 1, 4, 5, 6 are evident in the following two cases. In an interview, Alfonso Toledo Mendez (Legorreta & Bataillon 2007), an ex EZLN insurgent, discusses how he made his first connections with the movement. The story begins with his leaving home at a young age to attend a sleep-away elementary school called Yaxoquintelá, run by American Protestants. This process began his breaking away from his family and village, where he did not go back to during vacations for fear of not being able to return to school. The school ended up closing down before he had the chance to finish, and he was forced to return to his village in 1983. There he helped his father plant their cornfields and harvest coffee. However, the father had a drinking problem and would waste the family's money at the bars in the nearby market town of Ocosingo. The situation forced him and his brothers to look for employment opportunities elsewhere. They worked in home construction in the nearby communities within the forest, and Alfonso also worked as a ranch hand. It was through this kind of itinerant labor in 1984 when he was 15 that he met Benjamin, an agent of who I assume to be the FLN. Alfonso was interested in education and Benjamin promised him an opportunity to further his studies. In February of 1985 Alfonso went off to a FLN safe house in Mexico City for his education and training.

Similarly, it was not uncommon among the Kurdish-Turkish insurgents to lose their connections with their family and village, opening the way for new social connections and to recruitment. One respondent, of self-proclaimed "middle peasant" background, was recruited as a result of leaving his village to attend middle-school in the nearby town of Ağrı, the capital of the province of the same name where he lived. The towns in the late 1970s were a hotbed of conflict politics between leftists and rightists,

and groups sought to politicize students and recruit in the schools. He was recruited in 1978, at the age of 17, while attending middle school. His growing political activism was a basis of alienation between him and the older psychology prevalent in his village:

Let me say I was somewhat cut off from the village because in my village they were saying don't do this. They were fearful as I explained earlier. It'll be like Sheik Said... They'll crush us again and massacre us. That psychology was still prevalent. They thought you cannot take on the state. Even if we are Kurds we should be happy with our situation. This is how they thought. But in the student movement there was a reaction against this kind of thinking. If we're Kurds we should be able to express ourselves anywhere, no matter what happens.
(September 15, 2006, Istanbul)

Another respondent told me as he became an active member in 1994, at the age of 34 when recruited in his village near Cizre, "I did all kinds of work [for the PKK]. I pretty much had left my family behind; I wasn't working to maintain them or to help them anymore" (September 16, 2006, Istanbul).

Intra-family conflict and the pressures of traditional authority—mechanisms three and four—are also not unusual in explaining how and why people cut ties that would open others to their movements. Irma, a captain in the EZLN who had an older brother in the movement before joining, states, "they [her parents] were going to marry me off without my knowledge. When I found out, I decided to leave rather than stay there. I didn't want that man, since I was still very young" (quoted in Rovira 1997:68). Similarly, Hamdiye Demir, who had given herself up to security agents after having been in the PKK for fourteen years, stated in court, "My father wanted to marry me off to an old man. I didn't like the idea of marriage so I joined the organization. I was eighteen years old. I saw the PKK as an escape route since I had no choice," ("Niye dağa çıktım"? *Radikal* 10/1/06). As one city official from the city of Batman explained, "Because we have a closed social structure, when young girls are being pressured by their families,

they see going to the mountains as a way to express themselves” (quoted in Marcus 2007:174).

The intra-village-conflict, or mechanism three, is a fairly common aspect of village life in both case studies. Hectór, the Tojolobal respondent I referred to above, had formed close bonds with active militants. He recounted that tensions between Protestant converts and the Catholics in his community led to physical violence in the 1980s. This, he said, alienated him from life there. It pushed him to look for opportunities outside of the village. He went into the Lacandón Forest where he went to work for a lumber company. While there he formed contacts with the EZLN through the people he worked with who lived in the nearby communities. Hectór ended up training with the EZLN. Miguel, as mentioned above, saw his uncle gunned-down before his eyes by people hired by a local landlord (February 4, 2007, San Crisóbal). Several of my respondents of the PKK case discuss the violence of “blood feuds,” as noted above, which displaced them from their villages.

The state has also been responsible for the breakdown of stability in village life. Village guards, a program started in 1985, were men of the villages in Turkish Kurdistan who were armed, trained, and paid by the Turkish state to protect their area from the PKK. The violence between village guards and PKK insurgents certainly destroyed the stability of family and village social ties. The story of Zana (Uysal 2001:87-88), a PKK militant who joined when he was 15-16, illustrates this violence and the destruction of his family that ultimately formed the basis for his joining the movement. When he was 10 or 11 years old in 1987, a PKK guerrilla arrived at his home and knocked on the door demanding that they open up. Zana opened the door. The guerrilla asked for Zana’s

father. As Zana turned to call for him, his father began shooting and killed the guerrilla. A shootout ensued which lasted from evening until dawn. During the conflict, Zana's mother is killed. His siblings and relatives are also hurt. Zana sustained wounds from a bomb whose parts medical attention could not completely remove. Zana, as an insurgent, engaged in a lot of military action against the village guards, who he blamed for his mother's loss and his own injuries.

State repression and intra-village conflict—or mechanism number two—is a common mechanism in uprooting peoples' lives and leading them to their respective insurgencies. Silvia, an 18 year-old EZLN militant (at the time of her interview) of Chol ethnicity, ties intra-village conflict with state repression:

In my village not everyone belonged to the EZ [Zapatista army] and in 1990 they [some members of the community] betrayed us. About 500 armed *federales* arrived and registered all the people in the community and found some weapons. We were small, organized groups and that's why they investigated us. They wanted to know who were the leaders and who was inciting the people of the *ejido*. One person talked and gave them all the names. They took prisoners. Some were able to hide. But they took the leaders and these leaders were never seen again. Those who escaped were able to get here to this community [of Guadalupe Tepayac located in the Lacandón Forest, considered a stronghold of Zapatista militancy]. They came looking for them, shooting in all directions. They killed some; [I know] because I never saw them again. (Quoted in Rovira 1997:64)

One of my Kurdish-Turkish respondents, after a PKK attack on the police station located in his village in the province of Şırnak in 1991 when he was 19, discussed how the Turkish military exacted revenge on the whole village. After being forced to flee, he made his way to Istanbul looking for work and a means to support his family. He had left them behind in the region. Once in Istanbul he could not find work because employers would not hire him since he was from the Kurdish region. He took an active role as a recruiter for the PKK. He states, “Here I was a peasant, a villager, recruiting university

students who wanted to fight the state for ideological reasons. I just wanted revenge” (November 1, 2006, London).

5.3 Evaluating the Role of Political and Military Organizations

The question of organization leads to a fundamental debate within the literature on the degree that peasant rebellions are autonomous. Paige (1975) and Scott (1977) both see violent rural uprisings as essentially autonomous and internally driven affairs. Paige (1985) in his study on Nicaragua does see the Sandanistas as capitalizing on a proletarianized rural class living on the urban periphery of the cities in the cotton-growing region. Migdal (1974) and Popkin (1979) give external political organizations a central role in revolutionary uprisings, but Migdal differentiates between historical periods: movements in the second half of the twentieth century tend to be organized, whereas the rebellions of the early part of the century and prior tend to be more spontaneous. For Migdal, the greater systemic threat of capitalism requires greater organization on the part of peasant groups.

Skocpol (1982) divides forms of peasant revolutionary mobilization historically in terms of the role peasants play in the formation of the revolutionary state.¹⁰ In the French, Russian, and Mexican revolutions, peasants were well organized at the local level and

¹⁰ Florencia Mallon (1995), indeed, emphasizes the importance of the historical participation of peasants in the state-making process in Mexico and Peru during the pivotal period of 1850-1900. While the Shining Path emphasized the “total bankruptcy of the Peruvian state” (1995:311), Mexican peasant coalitions in 1991 protested the betrayal of that country’s revolutionary legacy by the Salinas government’s attempts to reform article 27 of the 1917 constitution which protected communal village properties. The extremism of the Shining Path versus the Mexican peasantry’s acknowledgement of the original legitimacy of their revolutionary state ideology reflects the degree that popular agendas were incorporated into official state ideologies. Because of the important role Mexican peasants played during key events of the nineteenth century helping to consolidate state power, state elites were much more willing to carefully incorporate popular ideologies within the official one to a greater degree than was the case in Peru, where popular political cultures were marginalized and repressed.

successfully revolted, as the old-regime broke down, against the landed and conservative classes, thereby facilitating their fall from dominance. In turn, “[o]rganized revolutionaries have then consolidated new state organizations, not by politically mobilizing the peasantry, but rather by more or less coercively imposing administrative and military controls on the countryside” (363).

The organized revolutionaries of the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions, in contrast, according to Skocpol (1982), directly mobilized peasants who then participated in the construction of new state structures and institutions. Although Skocpol focuses on organizational differences rather than historical ones, perhaps the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban cases do mark peasant-based movements of a later historical era, as the EZLN and the PKK seem to follow this pattern, one of greater symbiosis between revolutionary parties and peasant populations. This symbiosis is also evident in the two waves of guerrilla movements in Latin America during the latter half of the twentieth century (Wickham-Crowley 1992). World historical epochs, after all, do structure the nature of political and societal institutions (see Marc Bloch 1965 [1961]).

Skocpol notes that when revolutionary organizations directly mobilize peasants, as in the second pattern of revolutionary uprising, the causal importance of autonomous villages loses significance. “What is more, many different kinds of peasants—subsistence smallholders in marginal areas, landless laborers or tenants, even solidary villages of peasants alone, or else villages of landlords and peasants together—can potentially be mobilized by revolutionary movements” (1982:364). Certainly, this is true, but the EZLN and the PKK have mobilized more extensively from among the more autonomous—from the state and its surrogates (*caciques*, *finqueros*, or *agas*)—villages and communities as

the previous sections have shown. Wickham-Crowley (1992) and Jeff Goodwin (2000) both focus on how “multiple sovereignty” requires a weak state apparatus for a guerrilla movement to grow. In the case of Venezuela in the 1960s the weakness of the state played an even more important role than the guerrillas’ own mobilizational activities (Wickham-Crowley 1992).

But in the cases of the EZLN and the PKK, the movements have presented a formidable challenge to the state and continue to survive, although weakened, because of the prowess of their organizational capacities, which further mitigate the emphasis on economic explanations. They have formed extensive networks which have transcended one specific location or area, stretching into cities and towns. Skocpol (1982) refers to the Vietnamese case, for example, to show that varied types of “agrarian cultivators” participated in that revolutionary uprising, including mountainous minority ethnic groups.

Based on information I gathered on thirty-seven PKK insurgents (see table 5.2 above), we see some expected patterns. For instance, we can see that insurgents were not tied down by marriage and family. They were also a fairly young population (average age of 20). However, we can see some variation in terms of gender and considerable variation in terms of, social class, geographic location, and level of education, thus confirming Skocpol’s assertion of a differentiated rural population that participates in such movements. Table 5.4 confirms that the movement has to have an organizational capacity to bring in peasants from diverse geographical sites and had the ability to train them in order to expand its power. The PKK recruited members from three distinct sites, the local village or town (13 of 35), national-urban (18 of 35), or transnational (4 of 35), and then sent them to its formal Mahsum Korkmaz academy (15 of 37) for military

training, education, and indoctrination in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, or to other training camps or facilities (9 of 37) located in Turkey or Europe.

Although I do not have such standardized data on the insurgents of the EZLN, several of my interviews and Marco Estrada's (2007) study point to its extensive organizational capacity.¹¹

Table 5.4: PKK Recruitment of Insurgents

	Gender	Place Recruited (local village/town, national urban, transnational)	Sent to Training Camp, Mahsum Korkmaz or Other
1	male	???	No
2	male	Local village	yes, Korkmaz
3	male	Transnational	No
4	male	National urban	yes, Korkmaz
5	male	Transnational	yes, Korkmaz
6	male	Local village	yes, Korkmaz
7	male	Local town	yes, Korkmaz
8	male	National urban	yes, Korkmaz
9	male	National urban	yes, Korkmaz
10	female	Local village	yes, Korkmaz
11	female	Local village	yes, other
12	female	National urban	yes, other
13	male	Local village	yes, Korkmaz
14	female	National urban	yes, Korkmaz
15	male	Transnational	no, (invited to Korkmaz)
16	male	National urban	No
17	female	National urban	yes, Korkmaz and other
18	male	National urban	No
19	male	National urban	yes, Korkmaz and other
20	male	National urban	yes, Korkmaz
21	male	Transnational	yes, Korkmaz and other

¹¹ The EZLN and the PKK have some similarities as militant guerrilla organizations. They consist of hierarchical divisions with seemingly specialized functions—an armed wing (a guerrilla force and a militia), a layered command structure of officials, those who specialize in recruitment, propaganda, and indoctrination (see Estrada 2007, Imset 1992, Marcus 2007). The EZLN consists of, according to Estrada (2007:398-399), of a “High Command, a Clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Committee (CCRI), the Commandancia, the officials, insurgent troops and the militia.” Located within the “armed rebel communities” or “the bases of support” are the divisions that work in the area of promoting education and health.

The PKK consists of: the Central General Secretary, the Central Executive Committee, the armed wing of full-time insurgent guerrillas known as the Kurdistan Unit of Liberation (HRK), which includes a section that is called the Kurdistan Front of National Liberation (ERNK), dedicated to organizing and recruitment at the local level in order to establish local bases of support and an armed militia (see Imset 1992).

22	male	National urban	yes, other
23	male	Local village	yes, other
24	male	National urban	No
25	male	Local village	yes, other
26	male	Local village	No
27	male	???	No
28	male	Local village	yes, other
29	male	National urban	yes, other
30	male	National urban	No
31	female	National urban	No
32	male	National urban	yes, Korkmaz
33	male	National urban	No
34	female	National urban	yes, other
35	male	Local village	yes, other
36	male	Local village	No
37	female	Local village	No

Source: *Serxwebün* (PKK publication). 4/1992:7-9; 3/1993:15-21; 1/1992:16-22; 4/1994:23-26; 12/1994:23-25; 1/1995:8-12; 2/1995:21-22.

One respondent (February 4, 2007, San Cristóbal), a former insurgent who participated in the battle for Ocosingo, told me that she was recruited at the age of twelve in 1988 from her highland community. The organization was working closely with the families of her community, giving classes, helping in the planting and harvesting, and supporting them in their land claims issues against the ranchers. Consequently, the EZLN won the trust of the villagers. With promises of furthering the education of the children of these families, the EZLN was able to take young kids to cities such as Monterrey and Mexico City to give them stylized training and indoctrination.

The husband of this respondent, Miguel, already referred to above, told me he was recruited in his family's community in 1989 in the Lancandón Forest and then sent off to San Cristóbal for his education and indoctrination by the EZLN. There he was put to work in recruitment and propaganda among displaced indigenous peasants who had settled in the city in the form that Paige (1985) had emphasized in the Sandanista case. Another respondent (January 25, 2007, Oventic, Chiapas) talked of how the EZLN would

come to his highland community to talk to and educate the farmers there. The PKK by the latter half of the 1980s was sending peasant recruits to western cities in Turkey to begin recruiting among the migrant Kurdish population. Azman, a lawyer recruited into the PKK in 1988, recounted to what led him to the movement. In part this had to do with the peasant activists working in the cities: “In Antalya we had one acquaintance, he was a villager, someone who didn’t know much about the world, but he was the representative of an illegal organization and this sparked a certain interest among some of us” (quoted in Marcus 2007:132).

The process of trust building was important and seemingly successful for the EZLN and the PKK. Hectór, who had established contacts and trained with the EZLN after arriving in the Lacandón Forest in order to work with a lumber company, told me that the EZLN does what it preaches, unlike the official political parties. Similarly, many of my Kurdish-Turkish respondents said the same of the PKK. One observer (October 18, 2006, Diyarbakir) for example, speaking of his village near Lice in Diyarbakir province spoke of the success from [1988-1990] of the PKK in winning support: “The PKK told us that they would resolve the conflicts of those in the village. They then went and negotiated with the different parties within the village who were at odds and brought them together to accept some kind of agreement. Once the people of the village saw this they [the PKK] won the support of many.”

Prior involvement in some kind of organized political group or indoctrinating force also is a factor leading people to revolutionary groups. Table 5.5 shows that many PKK insurgents (19 of 37) had been involved in what I call pre-cursor political groups or organizations that may have helped formulate the links with the revolutionary

organization, a factor that Skocpol, Migdal, or Wickham-Crowley do not mention in the mobilization process. Wickham-Crowley, however, does mention the role played by university student associations. Such precursor organizations tend to meld into the actual insurgency.

The story of Jesús Santis Vázquez (b. 1967) (Mier y Teran 2004:22-24) illustrates the role of precursor organizations. After returning to his community of Morelia of the Altamirano municipality, after having completed two years of military service, he was named president of the Particular Executive Agrarian Committee in October 1985 by the young people in town looking to expand the *ejido*'s property rights. The position sent Jesús to the state capital, Tuxtla, where he began working with people from various NGOs. Based on suggestions by Francisco Gomez, an EZLN militant who died in the battle of Ocosingo on January 1, 1994, Jesús formed the organization the Peasant Alliance of Altamirano (ACA), which later went on to become the Emiliano Zapata National Independent Peasant Alliance. He represented this group in the

Table 5.5: Involvement in Pre-Cursor Political Groups or Organizations, and Life Experience Outside of Village

	Gender	Involvement in Pre-Cursor Political Groups or Organization	Life experience outside of village
1	male	yes (aga's political party)	yes (military)
2	male	yes (KUK)	No
3	male	No	yes (family migration, work)
4	male	No	yes (work)
5	male	No	yes (school, military service, work)
6	male	Yes	yes (work)
7	male	No	yes (school)
8	male	No	yes (school, work)
9	male	yes (street brawls as a student)	yes (school)
10	female	no (family is political & united w/movement)	No
11	female	No	No

12	female	No	yes (university)
13	male	yes (nationalist region & active in student movement)	Yes
14	female	no (but family active)	yes (family migration, for work to Europe)
15	male	No	yes (family migration to Europe)
16	male	No	yes
17	female	yes (Dev-Sol in 1987)	yes (family migration)
18	male	yes (student movement)	yes (school)
19	male	no (but family active)	yes (school)
20	male	yes (student movement)	yes (school)
21	male	yes (Faik Alagoz Egitim Devresi in Paris)	yes (school and goes to Paris to avoid military service; had a brother there)
22	male	yes (but involvement as a student)	yes (to escape tribal blood feud)
23	male	No	Yes (as a shepherd taking herds to summer pastures meets guerrillas)
24	male	yes (but involvement as a student)	yes (school)
25	male	No	Yes (as a shepherd taking herds to summer pastures meets guerrillas)
26	male	No	No (talks of revenge in village against extensive military repression & never left area to fight military)
27	male	No	yes (migrates at 13 to help family but constantly returns to village)
28	male	yes (student involvement)	No
29	male	yes	yes (family migration for work)
30	male	yes (student involvement)	No
31	female	yes (YCK in Istanbul)	yes (school)
32	male	Yes YCK	yes (school but also works selling pretzels to pay for school)
33	male	Yes (meets w/ party activists)	yes (family migration & due to repression)
34	female	Yes (YCK in Edirne)	yes (school to Edirne medical school)
35	male	Yes (informally in village; more formal in Europe)	yes (school, later works in Europe & leaves to flee conflict & repression)
36	male	no (but has contact w/PKK early on)	No
37	female	no (but PKK activism in area is strong)	No

Source: *Serxwebûn* (PKK publication). 4/1992:7-9; 3/1993:15-21; 1/1992:16-22; 4/1994:23-26; 12/1994:23-25; 1/1995:8-12; 2/1995:21-22.

Altamirano region as he “militated” in the EZLN under the code name *Nicodema*. During the late 1980s and early 1990s he was sent to Mexico City to help in recruitment of peasant migrants.

Jesús had considerable life experience outside of his rural community. Many of my interviews with Kurds from the villages show that there was extensive back-and-forth migration between the cities, towns, and the villages. Table 5.5 also indicates that many

(29 of 37) insurgents had life experience outside of the village before the joining the PKK. These migrations took place for various reasons: school, military service, family migration, work, to escape violence, or simply taking their herds of animals to summer pastures or camping grounds.

Such mobility among peasants could help in part to answer the question posed by Skocpol: “Under what social-structural and world-historical conditions have nationalist or communist parties, or both, emerged and become willing and able to address themselves to rural populations?” (365). Peasants who join pre-cursor political groups or insurgencies can, knowing the geography, the concerns of the people of the area, and having village-based and family-based social connections, take shelter and look to recruit among the rural population. One respondent in the PKK case spoke to me of how he learned of mobilization and activism as a seasonal migrant laborer working in the cotton plantations in the Çukurova region near Adana, which is located outside of the Kurdish region. Those like him who went for seasonal labor brought this activism back to their village in order to mobilize the peasants against the practices of agents who came to round laborers in their villages:

At that time, the ones going for work, such as those who went to collect cotton, had to work with appointed agents who received all the collected cotton and then take it to the operators who would then pay. This agent, who did not do the work, would take money from the laborers. At that time, this *talaba* [student] group would go and confront the agents so that they would not exploit the laborers or take too much money from them. They were doing union type work. They confronted the agents. Because of this, when the laborers returned to the village, they told the villagers that the *talaba* helped them, stopping the exploitation. They would also work among the laborers in their village in order to be able to organize them against the agents [who came to the villages to round up laborers]. They were working among the laborers in order to organize them like a union. (Interviewed on October 9, 2006, Istanbul)

The weakness of state power in the countryside certainly can facilitate the functioning of the insurgents in mobilizing. Skocpol notes on this account that “[i]n both patterns of revolution, defeats in wars and international military interventions are the most likely ways for existing state power to be disrupted—opening the way either for autonomous peasant revolts or for appeals by organized revolutionaries to peasant support in the countryside” (1982:366). Mexico and Turkey, as well as other underdeveloped countries such as Peru that have experienced peasant-based uprisings in the post-1980 period did not suffer through the disruptions of war or foreign military interventions. Instead, these countries went through a period of political and economic instability in the 1970s in which the states actively but not completely repressed the left-wing student movements located in the cities, pushing these activists towards the countryside where they provided for the organizational groundwork from which the EZLN and PKK could emerge. The uniqueness of these precursor networks is that they helped in the formation of elaborate institutional off-sites for training and indoctrination. The EZLN plucked very young peasants from Chiapas and sent them to central Mexican cities. The PKK largely sent young peasants across borders.

5.4 Conclusion

What do the EZLN and the PKK tell us about peasant-based rebellions in the age of globalization? Such organizations, as Skocpol has theorized, have both altered the social ties and relations of rural areas, and have taken advantage of changes within rural social ties. Yet, these cases also represent important departures from certain elements of Skocpol’s theorization. First, she argues that opportunities for revolutionary action arise

as state crises and disruptions lead to an “ultimate vacuum” (1982:372; see also 1979) of state power. While it can be argued that Mexico and Turkey suffered through a period of state crisis (1982 in Mexico, and 1979 in Turkey), this did not result in state collapse. Mexico and Turkey were already relatively low capacity states, as previous chapters have shown, particularly in their peripheral regions of Turkish Kurdistan and Chiapas. But what such episodes of crisis led to was an attempt by these weak states to impose state power in the regions in question by militarizing them and by solidifying alliances with certain social groups quite willing to employ violence against groups suspected of rebellion or activism.

We have seen examples of weak state capacity in the lack of governmental oversight over their corrupt officials who only add to the tensions and violence in the countryside, by allowing particular interest groups infiltrate state bureaucracies and security agencies. In the Chiapas case this has been the large landed interests and the ranchers. In the Turkish-Kurdish case, this has long been the large landed elites and the Islamists and ultra-nationalists. After all, the lack of “organizational integrity,” defined as “institutional coherence, competence, and capacity” (Woolcock 1997:168), within state bureaucracy and military organization is a reflection of state capacity.

These state-centered factors along with social-demographic changes, and the tensions they engender, seemingly play more direct roles than the increased intrusion of capitalism in the emergence in the revolutionary movements in the countryside. The breakdown of the moral economy, as Karapinar’s (2005) fieldwork in the village of Sinan indicates, had little direct influence on the emergence of the PKK, and we can say the same about the EZLN. These movements could recruit because, in addition to the

political and social space to do so, there was outright violence directed against smallholding peasants making emerging links with the EZLN and the PKK much more meaningful. It was not about abstract and impersonalized economic forces disrupting the lives of smallholders. They were, after all, not economically or politically beholden to large landlords.

The EZLN and the PKK cases show that squatters or squatter-types are at the center of these movements, similar to Wickham-Crowley's (1992) findings for the second wave of Latin American guerrilla insurgencies. The EZLN consisted of migrant communities to the Lacandón Forest who had to struggle to obtain land titles to the areas they settled. This undefined legal status left them open for coercive state action often aligned with the interests of ranchers and large landowners, as Table 5.1 above indicates. In the Turkish-Kurdish case we see squatter-like dynamics playing a role in hyping the violence and tensions in the countryside, as land holdings were often not officially declared, opening the way for land disputes between neighbors and large landed *agas* moving against villages they did not yet control.

Sharecroppers seemingly did not play a significant role in the post-1980 period of uprisings. Sharecropping-based villages and communities were more highly integrated into the larger economic and political structures in both Chiapas and Turkish-Kurdistan, providing little space for the counter-hegemonic EZLN and the PKK to operate. As a result of this greater integration, sharecropping arrangements seemed to be on their way out by the 1980s, as Karapinar's (2005) study indicates. Sharecroppers, at least those not displaced by continuing land enclosures, were turning into renters. Therefore, we can argue that the sharecropper, as an increasingly obsolete class during the age of

globalization, is no longer a threat for revolutionary militant action, as he may have been in the past (see Wickham-Crowley 1992).

Paige (1985) had made the case for sharecroppers as urban proletarianized migratory-estate laborers in his study of Nicaragua. But what is perhaps of greater significance are the seasonal migratory-estate laborers or simply laborers from the more autonomous smallholding villages, which continue to provide subsistence. Back-and-forth migration has helped bring the politics and politics movements of the larger society back to the villages.

The more socially fluid and varied existence of small-holding villages, free of the tight control of any kind central political and economic interest, and more alienated from the structures of the state, “displayed social and cultural structures that provided revolutionaries with ready access to a sympathetic peasant population” (Wickham-Crowley 1992:231).

Access came through what I have identified as the common “mechanisms of shifting political identities” that work in conjunction. Significant population growth and increasing land pressures since the 1950s, peasant migrations, and the increased interference of state officials, security agents, and their surrogates, including the structural nature of more autonomous small-holding villages have formed the backdrop giving these mechanisms greater significance. The more small holding type of villages and communities are not homogenous social units immune to exogenous forces, and particularly less so during the age of globalization. Rather, we see changes in the forms of social interaction in rural spaces that lead to the breakdown or stretching of old commitments and the formation of new ones. These new commitments emerge as new

social networks are formed through the process of forming a life outside of the village through work and education in nearby towns/cities, bringing these networks back to their villages, escaping intra-family repression or local area conflict, and through the role of the insurgent organization in actively building and fostering these networks.

These mechanisms were also facilitated by the activities of precursor political organizations working with the peasantry in both cases, politicizing and expanding networks for people of the villages. This seems to be an unidentified phenomenon in the literature. Existing networks in turn broadened the potential for the EZLN and the PKK to recruit, as they linked themselves to these existing networks. Furthermore, such networks also laid the groundwork for the uniquely elaborate training academies and camps that the EZLN and the PKK established in the central cities—found among the former movement—and abroad—for the latter. The mechanisms referred to above combined with a newer more elaborate organizational system, ultimately, laid the foundation by which revolutionary movements could grow in the current era.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

The formerly corporatist/populist states of Mexico and Turkey have faced significant armed peasant-based insurgencies in their post-1980 period of neoliberal reforms. The EZLN in Chiapas and the PKK in Turkey's southeast serve as ideal case studies in order to deal with some long unresolved questions in the literature on peasant rebellions, such as identifying the peasants who join insurgencies, figuring out the role played by greater capitalist penetration in the growth of these movements, and explaining the common mechanisms by which connections between militant organizations and individual peasants are forged.

Scholars have linked the rise of the EZLN and the PKK to changes that have arrived with the end of the Cold War era. I argue that the focus on the emergence of identity politics that has come with the end of the Cold War provides at best an abstract explanation for the rise of the EZLN and the PKK. Instead, I have tried to take what can be called an "eventful" approach to the mechanisms and processes of history at both the broader political-structural level and to those changes taking place at the village level to provide a more concrete and hopefully meaningful picture as to why peasants were joining these movements. This is because 'events are normally "path dependent," that is, that what happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring later in time,' and path-dependent explanations require a kind of historical narrative that brings out "the operation of analogous causal processes, which in practice means above all that narratives based on these analogies make sense of the numerous details that otherwise would seem purely accidental" (Sewell 2005:100).

Discovering analogous processes requires rethinking our approaches to the study of revolution. The literature on revolutions and peasant movements occurring in the twentieth century suggests that there is a high correlation between peripheral states/regions and revolutionary movements. Consequently, there must be some kind of connection between the processes by which these places become peripheral and the ways in which revolutionary movements emerge. The literature, however, is yet to make these links explicit.

I argue that the history of Chiapas and Kurdistan evince a distinct model of state building, one that differs from European forms (see Tilly 1992, Barkey 1994, Pamuk 2004). I call it “negotiated-intensive” state building. The Spanish-colonial/Mexican and the Ottoman/Turkish states never successfully imposed a monopoly of violence on these regions. Instead, they sought to establish alliances with local elites and strategize with them against other more recalcitrant elites and/or rival powers. This dependence on local power holders, with their own capacities to wield force, meant, in turn, that the central states never quite developed effective structures (i.e., bureaucracies, schools, and other institutions of state) of resource extraction and responsiveness to the needs of the populations. These local elites and the central states’ dependence on them in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan are what make these regions distinct from other parts of Mexico and Turkey respectively and thus peripheral.

The focus on negotiated-intensive state building provides a process-oriented approach to understanding the correlation between peripheries and counter-hegemonic movements, as indicated in the literature on revolutions. I have argued that the historical connection between peripheralization and revolutionary uprisings is found in the buffer

zone dynamics emphasized by political geographers, as opposed to the Wallersteinian world-systems approach to explaining underdevelopment. Negotiated-intensive state building lends itself to buffer zone dynamics. Since state hegemony is not fully established, a region becomes the center for constant struggles over hegemonic control between an array of rival powers and local actors.

Negotiated-intensive state building depended on forging alliances with local regional elites who were often at constant competition with another, and open to powerplays by rival powers. This high level of competition between factions is what made Chiapas and Kurdistan distinct from other peripheral regions within their respective empires. Factionalization became more marked as the Spanish and Ottoman empires increasingly faltered by the eighteenth century. The insecurities of the rival factions, in turn, led to the constant terrorizing of the indigenous populations in order to extract as much as possible from them by powerholders who could never be too secure of their future dominance.

Deep factionalism has been one of the fundamental legacies of negotiated-intensive state building leading into the centralization phase following the nationalist revolutions in both Mexico and Turkey starting in the third decade of the twentieth century. Centralization ideally entails formally incorporating local structures into some kind of professional bureaucracy and national political-party system without allowing these structures of state to be captured by narrow local interests—increasing state capacity without compromising state autonomy. The Mexican and Turkish states established their institutional presence in Chiapas and Turkish-Kurdistan highly unevenly, and those places that did have a state presence allowed personalized and informal

networks of power to continue to reign because local elites controlled local state institutions. Within the struggle to centralize, these weak central states had to bargain off degrees of state autonomy to local elites in order to increase some measure of state capacity in the problematic regions of focus here. In turn, diminished state autonomy meant that the Mexican and Turkish states would now be the target for any counter-hegemonic movement that would emerge. The selling off of state autonomy combined with the uneven development of state institutions in the regions, exacerbating the social divisions that existed.

The parceling out of state autonomy was the continuation of negotiated-intensive practices of relying on narrow, self-interested regional elites to do the bidding of their corresponding central states, as these allies of the state became incorporated in the national party system. The states' institutional presence in parts of Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan, in turn, became highly dependent on these local elites, who then used the same structures for their own enrichment. Selling off parts of their state autonomy brought lasting damage to potential democratic stability as a broadening of trust networks failed to develop, allowing the space in which the EZLN and the PKK—given the appropriate social and political developments such as significant demographic growth in the villages and the rise of active left-wing movements—to not only emerge in the 1970s, but to begin to significantly grow in the 1980s.

Negotiated-intensive patterns of state formation continued because Mexico and Turkey emerged as weak states following their nationalist revolutions. Both countries had faced fierce counter-hegemonic resistance in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan. Further, both countries faced a deep crisis during the Great Depression, pushing both countries

towards statist policies of import-substitution industrialization. The non-mobilizational nature of statist populism signified that both Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan, already highly deficient in infrastructure and highly dependent on subsistence agriculture, would continue to be neglected.

Certainly, political factors also intervened. As these two regions proved resistant to centralization, their corresponding states must have seen investment in these areas as risky, preferring instead to strategically assist those local elites who had aided the state against the counter-hegemonic Pineda movement in Chiapas and the Sheik Said rebellion in Turkish-Kurdistan, while punishing those that resisted. In the case of the Chiapan highlands, the Mexican state displaced the traditional indigenous leadership with a younger generation of bilingual scribes who eventually evolved into a political and economic oligarchy, dominating local state-initiated institutions while integrated in the national political party system. In the Turkish case, several important tribal families emerged as patrons of the state.

The 1950s marked a greater shift towards commercial agriculture in both Mexico and Turkey. This development signified the formation of greater alliances between the state and large landowners, with infrastructure being developed to serve the interests of larger-scale commercial agriculture and state-initiated institutions such as bank credits, schools, irrigation projects, and health clinics falling increasingly under the control of these elites. Simultaneously, Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan began to see some of the highest rates of population growth in their respective republics, which began to mark the increasing political and social divisions within smallholding settlements, as well as

between them and those controlled by larger landowners. Meanwhile, with some advances in infrastructure, rural migration was on the rise.

Local power holders in Chiapas and Turkish Kurdistan utilized their hierarchical positions of power to exploit the populations and compete with each other for resources, creating an atmosphere of tension and lawlessness, a situation that the EZLN and the PKK exploited in order to mobilize among respective rural populations which had been undergoing significant demographic growth since the 1950s. In fact, by the 1970s both the Mexican and Turkish states, in response to greater political, social, and economic instability, and perceived geopolitical threats, militarized the regions of focus and turned to paramilitary forces of local power holders for assistance. An uptake of violence and repression particularly afflicted villages that had maintained varying degrees of autonomy from the central states and their affiliated local elites, contributing to the common mechanisms by which peasants developed meaningful links with the insurgency organizations.

I identify six common mechanisms by which peasants have established links with the EZLN and the PKK. These are based on certain events: (1) seasonal or even more permanent migration for employment to cities/towns or nearby regions; (2) inter-peasant (local area conflict) or intra-village conflict—due to demographic factors such as population growth, or state repression, and/or third party actors, such as paramilitary groups, who foment conflict; (3) the decision to escape the repression of village-based authority figures; (4) intra-family conflict; (5) trust building by the insurgent organization or less-militant precursors within the village in order to obtain recruits; (6) leaving the village or community to attend schools in cities or towns (because of the dearth of

schools in villages) where psychological displacement from the village and family solidifies, and where organized political movements sweep up young peasants. These mechanisms often work in combination leading to the formation of meaningful ties with insurgent organizations.

These mechanisms have most directly affected squatter peasant communities in the Lacandón Forest of Chiapas, and those mainly smallholding villages in southeastern Turkey that have faced what I call “squatter-like” dynamics—i.e., conflicts between peasant households over land and honor due to significant demographic growth and/or violent repression from the state or third-party actors allied with the state. Following Wickham-Crowley’s (1992) findings on guerrilla movements in Latin America, the peasant communities and villages in the Mexican and Turkish cases most supportive of the revolutionary movements are also those where commercial agriculture has not completely taken over subsistence cultivation. Thus capitalist expansion as a factor plays more of an indirect role in the emergence and growth of insurgencies. Rather, I argue, the rural communities outside the control of any central state came to support the EZLN and the PKK more directly as a cause of greater social conflict in the countryside in general and activism from leftwing groups. Mexican and Turkish state policies exacerbated social conflict by seeking to impose their power through militarization and the formation of alliances with certain social groups quite willing to employ violence against groups suspected of rebellion or activism.

The mechanisms of mobilization show significant diversity of how young peasants found their way to these movements, a diversity that could only stem from those villages and communities whose lives did not revolve around a singular structure of

commercial agriculture serving the economic interests of a particular landowner. The more non-commercialized communities had more varied and fluid social existences with a more diverse demographic, where political power was not concentrated in the hands of one or a few. The statistics on those recruited for the PKK, for example, show significant variation in terms of their class backgrounds, as opposed to only having only “proletarianized” (as Marxist scholars would have us believe) sharecroppers, renters, or migratory-estate laborers who live on the edges of cities, as those filling the ranks.

The more autonomous corporate villages experienced greater population growth and land pressures, while the more commercially oriented communities saw stabilization or even a drop of population levels as people migrated out permanently. Because of the dependence on subsistence agriculture, the former rural community type experienced back-and-forth migration, extending the new social-political ties formed outside of the village to the village. Consequently, due to increasing land pressures that came with demographic growth, and a politicized peasantry that came with their greater mobility, the more autonomous rural communities became centers of struggle where precursor political and militant organizations were active. The later EZLN and the PKK linked themselves to these already existing ties and drew support as greater insecurity and violence ensued.

The ability of the EZLN and the PKK to link up with pre-established organizational networks marks a phenomenon not previously noted in the literature on peasant revolts. It is part of the reason why these two groups could pose formidable threats to their central states. Another factor was that the EZLN and the PKK showed extensive organizational capacity for recruitment and training. The EZLN, in addition to

setting up training camps in the Lacandón Forest, set up safe houses in the central cities of the republic for extensive military style training and indoctrination. The PKK had recruitment centers in varied locations in the country and abroad, and set up sophisticated training camps in Lebanon and later in northern Iraq.

Ultimately, the EZLN and the PKK illustrate the nature of political conflict in the age of globalization. First, despite the oft-made claim that states and state power during this age are receding, the movements grew as a result of their central states trying to impose their dominance over peripheral areas long outside their control. Secondly, in a world of squatters, smugglers, enemy combatants, undocumented migrant workers, and stateless refugees, conflict between aggressive states and groups will revolve around the ill-defined legal status of the populations that are targeted.

Using this study, we can identify some factors as to what may make a region a potential flashpoint of violence. First, the region is rural, with poor infrastructure, undergoing significant population growth. Secondly, the region's history has been one of continuing conflict. The first two factors signify that the state has a tenuous hold on the region. It therefore relies on certain local elites to act as surrogates for state power in the area. Thirdly, this reliance on select local groups means that there are significant social divisions in the region. Fourthly, population movements, developing networks by suspect organizations and groups, and threatening actions by neighboring states push insecure central states to militarize and (further) arm local allies. These factors may come together to cause a spiraling of tensions that, in turn, may lead to full-blown conflict.

Our analysis of the above factors and in developing causal analogies as to how peasant rebellions have grown in the age of globalization would be furthered

considerably by focusing on the histories of particular villages and communities and their relationship with such movements—a type of study to yet take place in the field of peasant revolts. That would help us obtain a picture that is closer to the ground, providing a greater depth to the mechanisms of mobilization or the obstacles that hindered them. Part of this more in-depth analysis would include a more detailed focus on how the EZLN and the PKK linked themselves to networks of people who were already participating in other leftist or activist groups in order to attract supporters. Comparisons between the histories of villages of opposing cases of those who supported and those who resisted the movements can help us identify with more certainty key mechanisms.

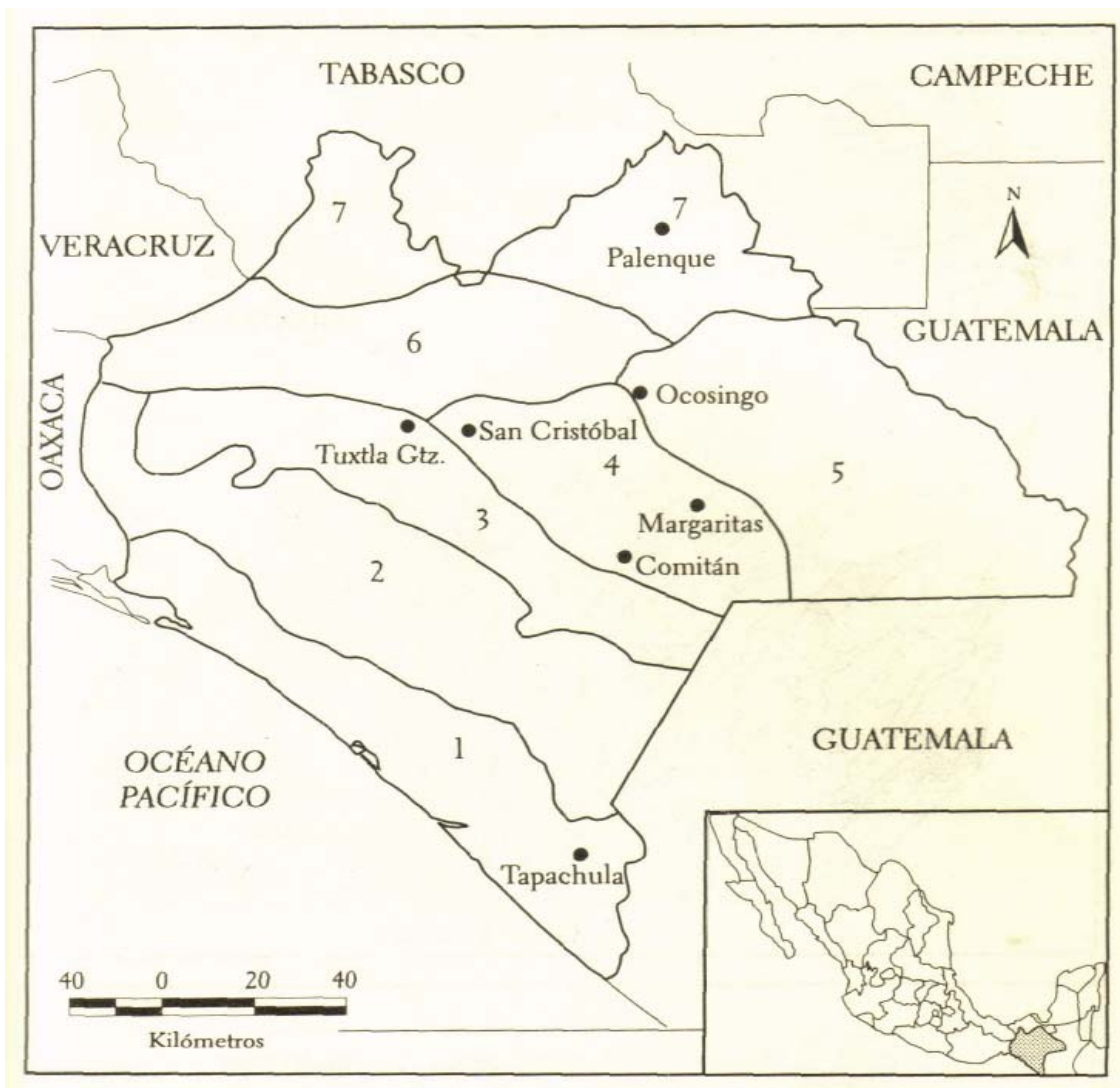
Also, long ignored are the life histories of those who have joined counter-revolutionary paramilitary groups. Perhaps, mechanisms of mobilization of counter-insurgents can be juxtaposed with those that account for participation in the revolutionary movements. Further, since both the EZLN and the PKK are noted for having a high number of women fighters, perhaps more so than in any time in the history of guerrilla insurgencies, it is of sociological interest to explore the stories of women within these movements and identify the distinct mechanisms of participation of this group. While there is a literature on Latin American insurgencies (see Kampwirth 2002), these comparisons have yet to be expanded to other parts of the world. I hope to pursue an analysis of the history of women fighters in the PKK.

The challenge of studying insurgencies, by their underground nature, is revealing their “secret histories.” The EZLN and the PKK, as elaborate organizations, have shown a tendency of documenting their histories, although selective in what they choose to reveal to the world. They have an ideological agenda to promote, after all. States have

also utilized more elaborate security systems to collect intelligence and information. But accessing these data is a risky business for any researcher, as these movements are still ongoing. Consequently, any study of them is highly politicized and states are distrustful. The other challenge is that protracted conflict often alters or destroys villages and communities. Gathering the history of a particular village then becomes a matter of tracking down former residents in the slums of major cities, both domestic and international. The future of research of peasant revolts in the age of globalization, therefore, offers both new opportunities and daunting challenges for greater in-depth analysis.

APPENDIX

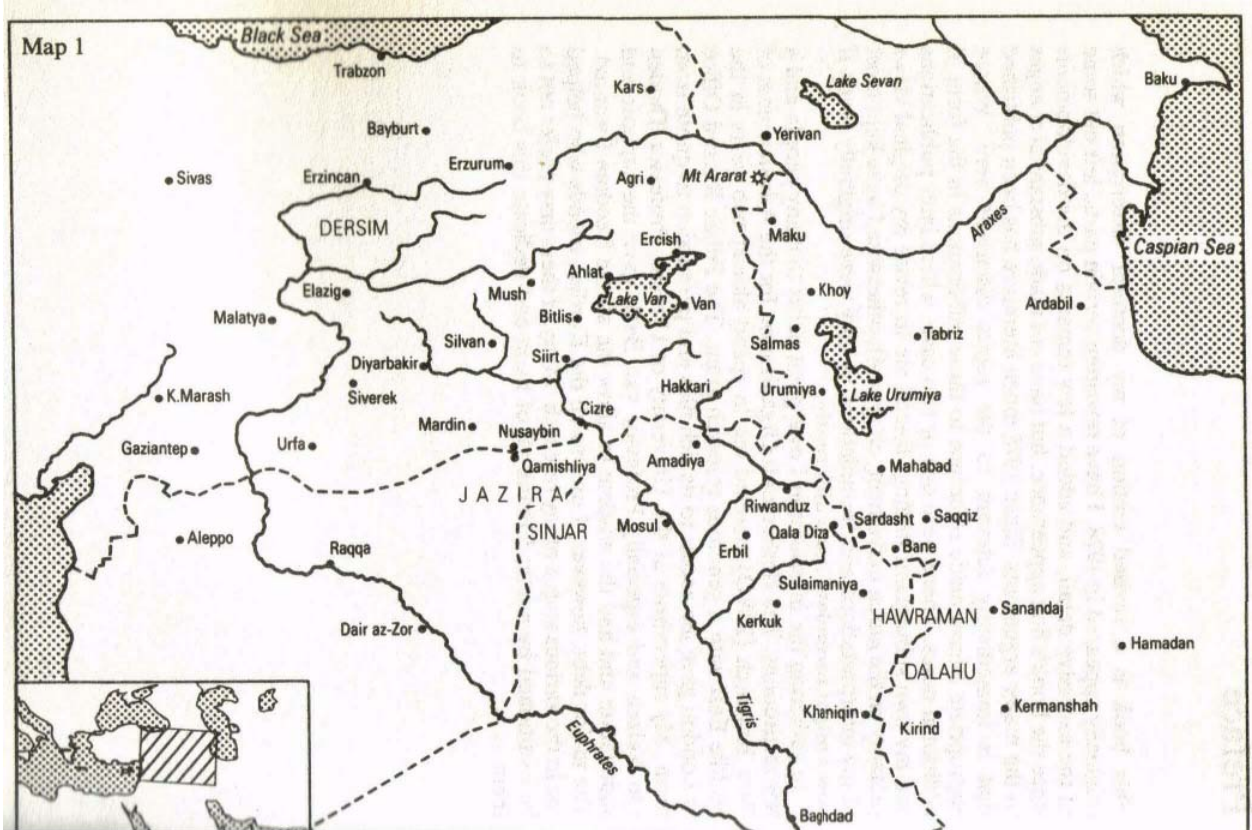
Map I
Chiapas, Mexico



Source: Jan De Vos 2002:417

1. Coastal Plains of the Pacific
2. The Sierra Madre Mountains of Chiapas
3. The Alto Grijalva Depression
4. Highlands of Chiapas
5. Mountains of the Lacandón
6. Mountains of the North
7. Plains of the Gulf

Map II
Kurdish Areas and Southeastern Turkey



Source: Martin Van Bruinessen 1992:X

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