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Food Sovereignty and the Via Campesina in Mexico and Ecuador: Class Dynamics, Struggles for Autonomy and the Politics of Resistance

Thomas Paul Henderson

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2015

Department of Development Studies

SOAS, University of London

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the class dynamics, politics, and ideology of food sovereignty in Mexico and Ecuador. It argues that engagement with class dynamics within the Via Campesina, the world's preeminent transnational agrarian movement struggling for food sovereignty, is essential for the construction of 'unity in diversity' necessary to challenge the neoliberal food regime. It interrogates the claim made by the movement and its proponents of a 'unified people of the land' to show that the food sovereignty project currently under-represents rural labour and producers of cash crops. It also shows that struggles of the landed peasantry for autonomy from and within the market can successfully resist the accelerated forces of proletarianisation, dispossession and immiseration that characterise much of the rural South in the neoliberal era. Autonomous struggles are the foundation of peasant production and reproduction strategies in Mexico and Ecuador today and are the basis from which food sovereignty's productive, political and ideological alternatives to neoliberalism must be developed. However, state-peasant movement relations are central to the construction of counter-hegemony. So too are peasant organisations' internal structures, their modes of representation between leaders and bases, and alliance building and conflict with other subaltern groups. These factors are critical in determining whether, and to what extent, the food sovereignty movement is able to transform neoliberal food and agricultural policies in favour of sustainable, small-scale peasant production guided by concerns for social and environmental justice rather than those of capital accumulation.

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Acronyms

AACH - Asociación Artesanal de Chucaple

AMSA - Agroindustrias Unidas de México

ANEC - Asociación Nacional de Empresas Comercializadoras

AP - Alianza País

ASOCODE - Asociación de Organizaciones Campesinas de Centroamérica para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo

CAP - Congreso Agrario Permanente

CCI - Central Campesina Independiente

CIOAC - Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos

CAN - Coordinadora Agraria Nacional

CCC - Central Campesina Cardenista

CNC - Confederación Nacional Campesina

CNC-EA -Confederación Nacional Campesina - Eloy Alfaro

CNOC - Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Cafetaleras

CNPA - Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala

CODUC - Coalición de Organizaciones Democráticas, Urbanas y Campesinas

CONAIE - La Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador

COPISA - Conferencia Plurinacional e Intercultural de Soberanía Alimentaria

EZLN - Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional

FEI - Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios

FENACLE - Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Agroindustriales Campesinos e Indígenas Libres del Ecuador

FENOC - Federación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas

FENOCIN - Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indígenas y Negras

FETAP - Federación de Trabajadores Agropecuarios

FLO - Fair Trade Labelling Organisation

FSM - Food Sovereignty Movement

FT - Fair Trade

ICO - International Coffee Organisation

IERAC - Instituto Ecuatoriano de Reforma Agraria y Colonización

IFI - International Financial Institution

IMF - International Monetary Fund

INMECAFE - Instituto Mexicano del Café

INDA - Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agrario

ISI - Import Substitution Industrialisation

MAGAP - Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuacultura y Pesca

MLAR - Market Led Agrarian Reform

NAFTA - North American Free Trade Agreement

NGO - Non-governmental Organisation

PACAT - Productores Agroecológicos y Comercio Asociativo de Tungurahua

PAN - Partido Acción Nacional

PCM - Partido Comunista de México

PNCC - Programa Nacional de Cacao

PRD - Partido de la Revolución Democrática

PRI - Partido Revolucionario Institucional

PRM - Partido de la Revolución Mexicana

PRODEPINE - Proyecto de Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas y Negros del Ecuador

PRONASOL - Programa Nacional de Solidaridad

PSE - Partido Socialista Ecuatoriano

PSUM - El Partido Socialista Unificado de México

SAP - Structural Adjustment Programme

SIPAE - El Sistema de la Investigación de la Problemática Agraria del Ecuador

SOE - State Owned Enterprise

TNC - Transnational Corporation

TNE - Transnational Exporter

UFC - United Fruit Company

UNCAFAECSA - Unión Nacional De Crédito Agropecuario, Forestal y de Agroindustria de Ejidatarios, Comuneros y Pequeños Propietarios Minifundistas

UNOCAR - Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas de Los Ríos

UNORCA - Unión Nacional de Organizaciones Regionales Campesinas Autónomas

UNORCAC - Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas de Cotacachi

UREAFA - Unión Regional de Ejidatarios Agropecuarios, Forestal y de Agroindustrias de los Pueblos Zoques y Tzotziles de Chiapas

UROCAL - Unión Regional de Organizaciones Campesinas del Litoral

VC - Via Campesina

Introduction

Over the last two decades ‘food sovereignty’ has become the guiding principle for many rural social movements around the world. Launched in 1996 by the Via Campesina (VC), the world’s preeminent transnational agrarian movement and promoter of food sovereignty, it has since been taken up by farmers’ organisations, fisherfolk, pastoralists, and civil society organisations worldwide. It has even been written into the constitutions of Venezuela (2008), Ecuador (2008), Bolivia (2009), Mali (2006), and Nepal (2007) (Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck 2011: 128). Its emergence and development as a unifying discourse and political programme since the 1990s is a direct response by diverse peasant groups and classes to the growing threats posed to their livelihoods by neoliberalism. These threats include rapid market liberalisation, withdrawal or elimination of state-support for production, marketing and credit, land privatisation and transnational capitals’ increasing concentration of power in input and food markets (Edelman et al, 2014: 914). Neoliberal globalisation has resulted in the intensification of depeasantisation and proletarianisation globally as withdrawal of state support for the peasant sector has combined simultaneously with new enclosures (privatised biotechnology and export agriculture), market led agrarian reform and international trade policies that flood Southern markets with subsidised agricultural products from the global North (McMichael, 2008: 209). However, according to its proponents, the food sovereignty movement (FSM)¹ and the peasant organisations that comprise it are actively defending their spaces from the neoliberal attack on their livelihoods (Rosset, 2011; Rosset & Martinez-Torres, 2012; McMichael, 2006; Ploeg, 2014). Moreover, they are contesting the subordination of food and agriculture to the price form (McMichael, 2008: 215) and seeking to replace the neoliberal food regime with a sustainable, peasant based production model in which securing human and environmental health and wellbeing, rather than capital accumulation, is the guiding principle.

Launched in 1993, the Via Campesina today unites more than one hundred national and sub-national organisations around the world opposed to neoliberalism and advocating a pro-poor, sustainable, rights based rural development and greater democratisation (Borras, 2004: 3). It is divided internationally into eight regions – East and Southeast Asia, South

¹ The Via Campesina is a constituent element of the food sovereignty movement, but the two are not synonymous. The latter is broader and includes many peasant organisations not aligned with the VC in addition to civil society actors such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) promoting agroecology and sustainable production systems.

Asia, North America, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Europe and Africa – and delegates from all regions gather together every three to four years for the VC's international conference to determine the movement's overall direction, policies and strategies. Regional and intra-regional meetings and conferences are held periodically to allow organisations to discuss and plan regional activities. The 16 member International Coordinating Commission is composed of two representatives (one man and one woman) from each of its eight regions and acts as the main link between various peasant organisations. The Commission is the key decision-making and coordinating body of the VC outside of the international conferences, and all decisions are made in consultation with its 16 members (Desmarais, 2007: 30).

The VC (2011) defends small-scale sustainable agriculture as a means to promote social justice and dignity. It strongly opposes corporate driven agriculture and transnational companies that, it claims, are destroying human society and the natural world. Its main goal is to realise food sovereignty and reverse the destructive impacts of neoliberalism based on the idea that sustainable small farmers are capable of feeding their communities and the world. The movement's understanding of 'food sovereignty' has changed over time (see Patel, 2007) but it currently defines the term as follows:

The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations...It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal-fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food (Via Campesina, 2007 - taken from the Nyéléni Declaration on Food Sovereignty).

This definition has become the stated organising principle for peasant organisations around the world that seek to reverse the forces of dispossession and impoverishment wrought by neoliberal food and agricultural policies. 'Food sovereignty' is embraced by these organisations as simultaneously a unifying discourse, political project and alternative socio-

economic model in their struggles against transnational capital and the institutions and policies of neoliberal states. It is constructed on the basis of a rejection of the hegemonic model of 'food security', the goal of which is to ensure that all individuals have enough food to eat without, however, concern regarding where that food comes from or how it is produced. As such, food security may be achieved through the free market and the massive import of cheap, subsidised food that undercuts local farmers and forces them off their land and into (further) poverty. According to McMichael (2009: 299) "free markets' exclude and/or starve populations dispossessed as a consequence of their implementation, in the name of food security'. For the VC, genuine food security – *sovereignty* – can only be achieved if people in rural areas have access to productive land and receive prices for their products that enable them to make a decent living. As such, food production and access cannot be left to the mechanisms of a liberalised world market but instead requires policies that support local markets and economic development as the only way to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty (Rosset, 2003: 1-2). Under the food security model, hunger and poverty are conceived as problems of inefficient trade rather than the result of corporate control over systems of production and consumption; food is a tradable commodity rather than a right, and hunger is a problem of distribution (Wittman, 2011: 91). In contrast, food sovereignty connects access to food as a human right to the rights of producers and consumers to shape food and agricultural policies. For Claeys (2012: 849), the VC's use of a rights framework attempts not only to institutionalise new human rights, but also reframe the very discourse of human rights itself. By claiming the right to food sovereignty instead of the right to food, the VC reframes human rights not only to a share of the social product, but also to the organization (and necessarily the democratisation) of production. This rights based approach contrasts with the purely economic rationale of promoting efficient market transactions at the centre of the food security model.

Table 1. Food Security vs. Food Sovereignty

ISSUE	FOOD SECURITY MODEL	FOOD SOVEREIGNTY MODEL
<i>Trade</i>	Free trade	Food and agriculture exempt from trade agreements
<i>Food</i>	Food as a commodity	Food as a human right
<i>Role of the state</i>	Promotion of efficient markets	Supportive policies for small-scale producers
<i>Production priority</i>	Based on comparative advantage and most profitable market conditions	Healthy, culturally appropriate food for local markets
<i>Crop prices</i>	Determined by market conditions	Fair and stable prices that cover costs of production and allow producers to live a dignified life
<i>Hunger</i>	Due to market failures	Result of inequality of access to productive resources and distribution of wealth
<i>Control over productive resources</i>	Privatised	Social, democratic and local
<i>Access to land</i>	Via the market	Via (state supported) redistributive land reform; land access as prerequisite for food sovereignty
<i>Technology and techniques</i>	Industrial, chemical intensive, monoculture, GMOs.	Agroecological, sustainable farming methods; no GMOs

(Adapted from Rosset [2003: 2])

The recent special issue of the Journal of Peasant Studies (2014, issue 6) on food sovereignty attests to the ongoing importance of the topic in both contemporary academic debates and processes of agrarian change. The introductory article rightly states that much of the early literature on food sovereignty involved a great deal of idealism given the concept's major contribution to galvanizing a broad-based and diverse movement around the need for radical changes in agro-food systems. Paraphrasing Bernstein (2014: 1056), sympathy for the movement and the wish to further its struggles often sacrificed pessimism of the intellect to optimism of the will. Contrary to this trend, in an article from the same journal by Borras et al. in 2008 examining the emergence, politics, and impacts of transnational agrarian movements, the authors argued that engaging with the complexities, contradictions, ambiguities and internal tensions that exist within rural movements is essential for advancing their transformative political projects. In order to do so the authors

suggested that researchers should engage with five main questions that apply to agrarian counter-movements:

1. What are the characteristics of the agrarian structures from which these movements have emerged?
2. What is the social base of the movements - which social classes, groups and sectors do they represent (claim to represent or not represent at all)?
3. What are the demands and issues put forward by global, national and local organisations on particular development and policy questions? What are the sources of these demands and the social and political forces that back them?
4. What are the issues that unite and divide agrarian movements and why?
5. To what extent have the discourses and campaigns and collective actions over time by these movements altered (or not) the very agrarian structures that they sought to change in the first place?

This thesis, like Borras et al. (2008) and the Journal of Peasant Studies 2014 issue on food sovereignty, aims to further the understanding of the contemporary food sovereignty movement through critical analysis of organisations that compose it, their internal characteristics, external relations, and their struggles. The following three sets of inter-related questions guide the research and were initially influenced by the five questions put forward by Borras et al. above.

1. What are the class characteristics of the organisations that compose the FSM? How and why have peasant organisations' class bases changed over time and how has this affected their demands and strategies? What social classes and groups are represented/under-represented/not represented, why is this the case, and what are the implications for the FSM's struggles and its claim to represent all 'people of the land'? To what extent are class-based differences between national level peasant organisations struggling for food sovereignty an obstacle for unity?
2. Given that the vast majority of today's peasants are integrated into capitalist commodity and labour markets, to what extent, why, and by what mechanisms are their struggles - as cash crop producers, subsistence growers and wage labourers - incorporated or not into the discourses and practices of the FSM?
3. How does the relationship between the state and national peasant movements shape political struggles for food sovereignty? Can the FSM's counter-hegemonic

discourse be uncritically assumed to represent counter-hegemony in practice?
What are the forces within the state that promote and defend the neoliberal food and agricultural model and how do they attempt to neutralise peasant opposition?
To what extent, how and why have peasant organisations been able (or not) to wrest concessions from or transform the state in the name of food sovereignty?

My research engages with these three sets of questions by examining the food sovereignty movement in Mexico and Ecuador with a focus on two national level peasant organisations in particular (and both members of the VC): CIOAC (*Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos* / Independent Central for Agricultural Workers and Peasants) in Mexico and FENOCIN (*Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indígenas y Negras* / National Confederation of Peasant, Indigenous and Black Organisations) in Ecuador. Through analysis of the historical development of these organisations' class characteristics, their struggles, and their political strategies, I hope to demonstrate the importance of class dynamics and peasant movement-state relations in shaping the food sovereignty movement and its potential to transform the neoliberal model of food and agriculture.

'The Peasantry' and Food Sovereignty

This research is theoretically guided by two broad schools of thought regarding 'the peasantry' in contemporary processes of agrarian change and its (transformative) role in the neoliberal era. Using Kay's (2001) terminology, 'proletarianists' and 'agrarianists' represent two very different outlooks on the role and the future of the peasantry within processes of capitalist development.² These terms are derived from debates among social scientists in Mexico in the mid-1970s as to the future of the Latin American peasantry under capitalism. For the proletarianists (or 'descampesinistas' in the Mexican debate), peasant production is economically unviable in the long-term therefore small producers are immersed in a process of proletarianisation that will lead to their eventual dispossession. Capitalist development strengthens this process of social and economic differentiation in

² Bernstein (2009) uses 'agrarian Marxists' and 'neo-populists' to distinguish these two sides of the debate. However, given that many so-called 'neo-populists' base much of their analysis within various strains of Marxism, and the negative political connotations associated with the word 'populism' - a label which seemingly attempts to discredit this school of thought from the outset - Kay's (2001) terminology seems to me to be more useful analytically and less politically charged.

which the vast majority are transformed into wage workers while a small minority - the most competitive - are able to expand reproduction and become small capitalist farmers (Kay, 2001: 377-379). Influenced by the works of Lenin and Kautsky on the agrarian question, the proletarianists foresee the eventual elimination of the peasantry as the majority are transformed into proletarians as a result of accelerated processes of class differentiation (Kay, 1994: 15-16). For many 'descampesinistas' in Mexico in the 1970s, the absorption of the peasantry into the working class was a political advance. Much of Latin America still had many more peasants than proletarians and so, as a result of their proletarianisation, they would presumably come to recognise their 'true' class interests to be aligned with the revolutionary working class. According to 'descampesinistas', this would not take place if they retained access to the land (Edelman, 1999: 203). Agrarianists (or 'campesinistas'), on the other hand, rejected the idea that the tendency towards differentiation is inevitable and instead claim that the peasantry is able to exercise considerable degrees of agency in order to resist proletarianisation. Instead of being eliminated as a result of capitalist development the peasantry persists, often highly successfully, and processes of re-peasantisation may and do occur in some areas while de-peasantisation takes place in others. Peasant production persists because, contrary to proletarianist arguments, it can successfully compete in the market with capitalist producers. A major reason for this is the use of unpaid family labour, often complemented by strong community ties for shared labour services. In addition to economic factors, political struggles also allow peasants to resist proletarianisation and dispossession. Agrarianist arguments are strongly influenced by the work of Chayanov, according to which the peasantry has a specific form of production and organisation which has existed for centuries within distinct modes of production, and will continue to do so in the future (Edelman, 1999: 203; Kay, 2001: 379).

In current debates, 'agrarianists' tend to be represented by activists and scholars allied or sympathetic to the FSM. For this group, the corporatisation of agriculture in the neoliberal era has been to the detriment of farming populations everywhere (McMichael, 2007: 60). As the neoliberal project 'has replaced the period of economic nationalism, de-peasantisation in the global South has intensified under the combined pressures of evaporation of public support of peasant agriculture, the second green revolution (privatised biotechnologies and export agricultures to supply global consumers), market-led land reform, and WTO (World Trade Organisation) trade rules that facilitate targeting southern markets with artificially cheapened food surplus exports from the North'

(McMichael, 2008: 209). Food production, food prices and hunger are all increasing, the roots of which lie in the 'corporate food regime' (McMichael, 2008). This regime is characterised by the unprecedented market power and profits of monopoly food corporations (Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011: 112) and intensified depeasantisation and proletarianisation via displacement across the world (Araghi, 2009: 134 & 135). Dispossession has accelerated the exodus of surplus rural labour to urban slums and led to the unprecedented growth of the global informal working class (Davis, 2004: 10 & 24). In response, agrarian movements guided by the struggle for food sovereignty have emerged to contest the impacts and the political and ideological underpinnings of the contemporary food regime.

According to agrarianists united in the Via Campesina (VC), the peasantry is emerging as 'a radical world historical subject' (McMichael, 2008: 225). Far from disappearing as a result of processes of capitalist development, peasants are reproducing themselves as a potent social and political force. They are struggling to bring about systemic change with sustainable peasant and 'small scale farmer' production at the core of the food sovereignty model (Desmarais, 2007: 37). According to proponents of food sovereignty, today's peasant movements are the only entities capable of bringing about the necessary structural change to the impoverishing and exclusionary agro-food system currently dispossessing the peasantry en masse (Rosset, 2011: 22). Peasants and their organisations are reformulating the basis of the agrarian question, traditionally understood as the existence of 'obstacles' to the complete development of capitalist agriculture in developing countries (Byres, 1995: 569). Rather than prioritising capital's transformation of agriculture, the FSM is struggling to transform agriculture *against* the accumulation imperative, challenging the institutional relations of neoliberal capitalism and attempting to re-territorialise spaces - physical and ideological - in defence of rural communities and sustainable peasant production (Rosset & Martinez-Torres, 2012). Centring food and its local, ecologically sustainable, peasant based production at the centre of agrarian questions of the 21st century (McMichael, 2008: 210-211), peasant movements across the world are struggling for a new society based on communal values that contradict the main tenets of capitalism (Teubal, 2010: 164).

For the proletarianists, neoliberal globalisation similarly represents a new phase of international centralisation and concentration, as well as mobility of capital (Bernstein, 2006: 13). However, whereas agrarianists argue that the FSM's resistance to the neoliberal food regime is the central component of the contemporary agrarian question, Bernstein

(2001, 2006) claims that accelerated (semi-)proletarianisation, increased class differentiation within the peasantry, and the growing informalisation of wage employment in the neoliberal era represent a crisis of labour, not of the 'peasantry' as a homogenous social category. Rather than transformation against the accumulation imperative as suggested by McMichael, Bernstein argues that labour is the core element of the contemporary agrarian question and must therefore feature as a central component of analysis of today's peasant movements and their struggles. Interpreted through this lens, the demands of the FSM are driven not by struggles of a (homogenous) 'peasantry' seeking systemic transformation based on sustainable peasant and 'small scale farmer' production, but are instead a response to increasing scarcity, under neoliberalism, of employment that pays a living wage (Ibid, 2006: 15). Contemporary peasant struggles constitute an 'agrarian question of labour' and are 'driven by experiences of the fragmentation of labour (including losses of relatively stable wage employment in manufacturing and mining, as well as agriculture), by contestations of class inequality, and by collective demands and actions for better conditions of living' (Ibid, 13). For Bernstein, the FSM's struggles over land as a basis of livelihood and reproduction - ever more difficult under globalisation and labour fragmentation - are fundamentally working class-based in nature. Land is sought as a means of subsistence because of the failure of the labour market to absorb the masses of dispossessed, thus constituting a crisis of social reproduction for labour, not 'the peasantry'.

Contrary to much of the FSM literature which assumes a unified 'people of the land' (VC, 2013), for proletarianists class dynamics remain essential for understanding processes of agrarian change and should always be a point of departure when analysing the complex and contradictory social relations activist movements seek to transform (Bernstein, 2010: 123). For Bernstein (2010: 103-104), when farming households are integrated into capitalist commodity relations they are subject to the dynamics and compulsions of commodity production. These dynamics and compulsions are internalised in their relations and practices. Once peasants become 'locked into' commodity production by the 'dull compulsion of market forces', their subsistence is commodified and the tendency to differentiation into classes takes hold. While many peasants are forced to combine off-farm wage employment with subsistence production to meet their reproduction needs, others turn to petty commodity production for their survival. Peasants are capitalists and workers at the same time as they have access to the means of production and employ their own labour in the production of commodities with varying degrees of market integration (Bernstein, 2001: 29).

Competition between petty commodity producers leads to class differentiation within the peasantry; a complete or partial loss of the means of production leads to proletarianisation or semi-proletarianisation; middle peasants are able to meet the demands of simple reproduction through varying degrees of market integration and petty commodity production; rich peasants are able to expand reproduction through the hiring of wage labour and the buying or renting of more land or other means of production beyond household capacity (Ibid:30). The increasing importance of rural non-farm activities in terms of employment and incomes exaggerates this tendency, with some peasants working in activities where they earn more than they did before, while the majority are forced to earn less (Kay, 2008: 923). As such, peasant struggles for food sovereignty are 'likely to embody uneasy and erratic, contradictory and shifting, alliances of different class elements and tendencies than to express the interests of some clear-cut and unitary class subject, be it proletarian or peasant, semi-proletarian or "worker-peasant"' (Bernstein, 2006: 16). Rather than claiming or advocating a unity of 'people of the land', 'in effect a single class exploited by corporate capital' (Bernstein, 2010: 112), a class unified subject cannot be assumed, 'but would have to be constructed from heterogeneous local, regional and national "farmers movements", with all their variations of specific processes of agrarian change and the circumstances of different rural classes..., and of specific histories, experiences and cultures of struggle' (Ibid: 121).

The theoretical framework of this thesis draws from both agrarianist and proletarianist approaches to understanding the peasantry and contemporary rural struggles. In accordance with proletarianist analysis, class differentiation is understood as a major factor in shaping the form and nature of the food sovereignty movement, and processes of agrarian change more broadly. As Bernstein (2014: 1041) writes, in the movement's discourse 'peasants' are variously personified as capital's other; 'food sovereignty discards crucial elements of agrarian political economy, of the political economy of capitalism more broadly, and of modern history, in order to establish its thesis and especially its antithesis: capital's other' (Ibid: 1057). However, 'peasants' as a unitary concept constructed in opposition to capital disguises important class-based differences within and between peasant groups. As such, class dynamics must be brought back in to FSM debates and analysed in terms of how they shape the FSM and its struggles³. It is not sufficient to simply recognise that class differences within the peasantry exist, as McMichael (2015: 199) does

³ See Borras, 2008 and Edelman, 2008 for two of the very few examples of class analyses of contemporary agrarian movements. Their works are discussed in more detail in chapter two.

in his rejoinder to Bernstein (2014). Rather than focusing on contradictions, McMichael argues that the struggle is to construct unity in diversity. However, to successfully construct such unity requires in depth analysis of the class dynamics that shape contradictions and conflict within the FSM rather than simply acknowledging that they exist. Jansen's (2015: 227) discussion of the debate between Bernstein and McMichael concludes that the positions held by the two authors are not necessarily mutually exclusive. If class analysis is incorporated into agrarianists' tendency to conceive of the peasantry as a homogenous grouping in opposition to capital then, he argues, it becomes possible to rethink 'capitalism from below' in the search for alternatives to the neoliberal food regime. This thesis attempts to do precisely this for the FSM.

Despite its centrality, how 'class' is understood cannot be reduced to a structural position within the relations of production, as it is in Bernstein's (2001) conceptualisation of 'petty-commodity producers'. Class analysis of food sovereignty through the capital/labour lens eliminates agency from peasant production and reproduction strategies. It also equates 'petty-commodity producers' structural positions (determined by 'particular combination(s) of class places and capital' [Ibid: 29]) with their class interests. Despite sources of wage-labour having become increasingly informal, insecure and scarce (Ibid: 2006: 13) in the neoliberal era, and the increasing proportion of peasants' household income now being derived from wage labour (Kay, 2008: 923), today's agrarian question and the FSM cannot be reduced to a survival response by a labour force increasingly unable to be absorbed by neoliberal globalisation. As McMichael (2007 & 2014) suggests, and as will be demonstrated in the chapters that follow, demands for food sovereignty go much deeper than that.

Contrary to Bernstein's (2001) assumption, market integration does not always equate to market dependence. By retaining access to the means of production, peasant households are often able to exercise a degree of autonomy from market imperatives (Ploeg, 2010; Wood, 2002). They can resist full commodification and use land as a space for the political and ideological construction of alternative, non-capitalist social relations (Vergara-Camus, 2014) that form the basis of the social transformations envisaged by the FSM. As McMichael (2007: 64) argues, many of the VC's members aim to limit their subjection to capital and practice an alternative form of modernity based on reversing and denaturalising the act of dispossession. However, how this aim is interpreted and manifests itself is shaped by the diverse class characteristics of peasants and their organisations struggling for

food sovereignty. It is also influenced by their specific experiences of capitalist development across time and space. For example, struggles of landless peasants are often very different in nature, possibly even conflicting, to those of landed peasants seeking to make a viable living from the land they already occupy. Similarly within landed peasant classes, contradictions may exist between market dependent and relatively more subsistence based groups.

In order to understand the nature of such differences with the aim of constructing unity in the diversity within the FSM, how 'class' is itself conceived must go beyond structural positions in the relations of the production. It must include political and ideological elements that also shape class formation. As Otero (2004a: 41-45) argues, not every strata (in the relations of production) of 'direct agrarian producers' necessarily constitutes a class; structural borders are less important than how groups, classes and communities define their demands (or objects of struggle), construct organisations to defend their interests, and establish alliances with other organisations based on shared experiences of exploitation and oppression. A political understanding of class casts light on the agency of the peasantry in resisting dispossession and proletarianisation, whereas a structural understanding based on the capital/labour binary (Bernstein, 2009) casts the peasantry as a passive object, destined to be dissolved by (path-dependent) capitalist development. A political understanding of class formation can bridge the divide between agrarianist proponents of food sovereignty who downplay the importance of class differences within the peasantry, and proletarianists who rightly focus on the centrality of class dynamics in shaping processes of agrarian change and resistance, but whose over-structuralist framework cannot adequately engage with the fundamental nature of FSM struggles within and against neoliberalism.

This thesis will demonstrate the centrality of class dynamics to contemporary struggles and debates around food sovereignty. It will show that the interests and demands of landless and landed peasants are often different - even contradictory - in nature, and very difficult to unite under a shared platform of struggle. As such, addressing class differences within the FSM is essential for the construction of the unity in diversity necessary to challenge the hegemonic neoliberal food regime. To do so requires in depth analysis of the production and reproduction strategies of peasants that compose the movement, and the class-based demands that derive from these strategies. In the cases of Mexico and Ecuador, I will argue that the production and reproduction strategies of CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao

producers are driven by the desire to maximise relative autonomy both from and within increasingly volatile and poorly remunerating commodity and labour markets. Analysis of autonomous struggles may bridge the divide between more structuralist (proletarianist) interpretations of contemporary rural struggles that downplay peasant agency in resisting proletarianisation, and agrarianist conceptions which tend to under-appreciate the importance of class dynamics within the peasantry in shaping FSM demands and strategies. Articulating with peasant struggles for autonomy, peasant organisations' interactions with neoliberal states are critical for determining their counter-hegemonic potential to bring about social transformations in the name of food sovereignty. I will show that peasant organisations' internal structures and their relationships with national states shape their capacity to contest neoliberal food and agricultural policies and construct counter-hegemony.

Methodology

I chose the Via Campesina (VC) - constituted on the struggle for food sovereignty - as the starting point for my research of the food sovereignty movement. The decision to focus on Mexico and Ecuador was based on a combination of past experience and the goals of my comparative study. My interest in Latina America's peasant movements derives from work experience in rural development organisations in Mexico and Guatemala and I was keen to research the food sovereignty movement in the former - a country with what is widely regarded as an institutionalised, or 'neo-corporatist' peasant movement - on the basis of a comparison with a country considered to have a 'strong' and independent peasant movement. The Ecuadorian indigenous-peasant movement's central role in Correa's rise to the presidency in 2006, and its successful struggles to enshrine food sovereignty into the country's 2008 constitution, convinced me to use Mexico and Ecuador as my two national cases. In order to ground my research in concrete analysis of movements in both countries I chose to focus on two national level VC member organisations; CIOAC in Mexico and FENOCIN in Ecuador. Why these two in particular? Both are national level members of the VC and claim to be guided by 'food sovereignty' (as defined by the Via Campesina [2007]) as their central focus of struggle. The VC is an important constituent element of the food sovereignty movement internationally, but the latter encompasses a broader spectrum of rural actors and interests with different interpretation of the meaning of food sovereignty. As such, selecting two movements within the VC that (at least discursively) share the same

definition of food sovereignty, provided my comparative analysis with a conceptually constant point of reference. Both organisations also claim to represent a spectrum of subaltern rural classes, from the landless to those struggling to make a living from the land, as well as indigenous peoples and rural workers, and so provide the basis for engaging with my first set of research questions relating to the class characteristics of the FSM. Engagement with the second set of research questions - the production and reproduction strategies of peasants within the FSM - required the selection of comparable peasant groups between both organisations. Focusing on CIOAC's coffee and FENOCIN's cacao producers provided both a means of examining the role of export crops and wage labour in the food sovereignty movement and a manageable and comparable structure for the fieldwork. By focusing on producers of these crops I geographically concentrated on specific regions of both countries - the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero in southern Mexico and the coastal plain of Ecuador - necessary given the national extension of both organisation's influence and my own time and resource constraints. This crop focus determined the communities in which fieldwork was conducted as a starting point. Both organisations' national leaderships facilitated my presence in these communities from which I was able to work my way up through a vertical cross-section of CIOAC and FENOCIN, from their grassroots organisations upwards to the national committees via municipal and state/provincial levels. This allowed me to analyse the organisations' internal structures - their class bases, leaderships and the modes of interaction between the two, critical for my final set of research questions. Both organisations share a history of close working relationships with Leftist political parties and of oppositional stances and tactics with regard to their respective national states during the Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) period which have transformed into relations better characterised as 'critical engagement' over the neoliberal era. The analysis of this transition is critical for understanding the form and relative success or otherwise of their political strategies, and therefore their potential to transform the neoliberal food regime.

The form of my research methodology coincides with McMichael's (1990) 'incorporated comparison', used to conceptualise variation across time and space when both dimensions are neither separate nor uniform (Ibid: 385). It is theoretically grounded in the belief that social systems are constantly evolving (Ibid: 386). Rather than some case-oriented comparative methods that are used primarily to pinpoint patterns of constant association rather than explain variation (Ragin, 1989: 42), incorporated comparison strives to give substance to a historical process through a comparison of its parts. In the case of my

research the historical process is the development of the FSM and its parts consist of two national peasant organisations that form it. The purpose is to develop historically grounded theory through the comparison of the elements that form part of a dynamic whole (McMichael, 1989: 396). The fieldwork for this thesis was conducted on a reflexive basis which, as stated by Burawoy (1998: 5), is premised upon engagement with the world we study, not detachment from it. Reflexive is distinguished from positive science on the basis that there is no 'external' world that can be construed as separate from and incommensurable with those who study it (Ibid: 10).

I carried out a comparative cross sectional analysis of both organisations over the course of nine months, from September 2012 to June 2013. In Mexico two months were spent in the state of Chiapas; two weeks in the municipality of Jitotol, three in Las Margaritas and the remainder of the time in the state capital of Tuxtla Gutierrez where the state leadership committee is based. One month was spent in Oaxaca; two weeks in the municipality of Huautla de Jiménez and two in the state capital of the City of Oaxaca, again where the leadership resides. In Guerrero, owing to security concerns, I spent just ten days travelling between communities in the municipality of Tlapa de Comonfort with CIOAC's state leader. From Guerrero I spent six weeks in Mexico City based in CIOAC's central offices.

I was in Ecuador for three months and had initially planned to spend two of those months on the coast with FENOCIN's cacao growers. However, realising soon after my arrival in Quito that the organisation's power is concentrated in the Andes - a significant factor shaping its political strategies - and that the class characteristics of the country's peasantry varies significantly between the coast and the Andes, I decided to divide my time more evenly between the two regions. I spent a week in each of the coastal provinces of Rios, Esmeraldas, El Oro and Pichincha with FENOCIN cacao growers in addition to two weeks in the Andean province of Imbabura and one in Tungurahua. The remainder of the time was spent in Quito with the national leadership.

In addition to the organisational cross-sectional analyses I met with employees of state institutions that worked with CIOAC and FENOCIN's members in providing and administering state projects and programmes, again from the municipal to the federal levels. Having arranged interviews with municipal level employees of different state legitimating institutions I typically used snowball sampling to gain access to interviewees at higher administrative levels. The interviews with state employees were focused on institutions responsible for 'social development' and those working on productive issues

with particular emphasis on the coffee sector in Mexico and the cacao sector in Ecuador. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with transnational export firms and their intermediaries that worked with and/or bought coffee and cacao from both organisations' members. I also interviewed members and leaders of other rival and allied peasant organisations. All of this allowed me to triangulate my findings and provided alternative observations and perspectives regarding my central research questions. In terms of data collection within CIOAC and FENOCIN's grassroots communities, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used throughout. With the members of both organisations I used two interview templates, one focused on issues of household production and reproduction strategies and the other on social and political themes (appendices one and two). These were 'templates' in that dialogue between myself and the interviewees provided an 'ever changing sieve for collecting data' (Burawoy, 1998: 11). Each day I refined or altered the template based on the previous day's intervention with the ultimate aim of achieving synchronicity between my theories and what I was studying (Ibid: 17).

Structure of the remainder of the thesis

The following chapter examines the emergence of food sovereignty as a central organising principle for national peasant movements in Mexico and Ecuador. It details the background of CIOAC and FENOCIN's emergence and acts a historical backdrop for the rest of the thesis to contextualise discussions in later chapters. It asks why, despite the claim that 'the impact of neoliberalism on pre-existing rural production and exchange relations has had varying impacts on different social classes, regions and sectors and within and between countries' (Borras et al, 2008: 182), distinct peasant organisations across the globe have come to contest neoliberalism under the unifying banner of 'food sovereignty'. It does so by examining the very different agrarian structures from which CIOAC and FENOCIN have emerged, how these have developed to shape the historical form and content of peasant struggles in both countries, and why - despite such historical differences - the contemporary peasant movements of both countries now share 'food sovereignty' as their central focus of struggle. Using Byres (2003) typology of agrarian transitions, it will show that there has been a convergence between Mexico's historically (state-mediated) 'from below' and Ecuador's 'from above' paths as a result of the implementation of neoliberal policies in both countries from the late 1970s and early 1980s. This led national peasant movements in both countries to embrace food sovereignty in the 1990s as a unifying

discourse to contest neoliberalism. However, as we will see, how the term is understood and the demands that it encompasses are shaped by the agrarian structures within which peasant organisations are embedded, their class characteristics, and the political strategies they pursue.

The second chapter is based on my first set of research questions. It investigates the social bases of CIOAC and FENOCIN; the classes, groups and sectors they represent, claim to represent and do not represent at all, and how this shapes organisational demands. It aims to interrogate the food sovereignty movement's (Desmarais, 2007; VC, 1996; Rosset, 2011) claim to speak for 'all people of the land' by demonstrating the class based nature of CIOAC and FENOCIN's demands and how this impacts relationships both within and between peasant organisations struggling for food sovereignty. It will show that the class characteristics of peasant organisations' mass bases shape (without determining) interpretations of food sovereignty. It will also examine the difficulties that the VC confronts in attempting to unify all subaltern rural classes, especially landless and landed peasants, within the same movement.

Having established the class characteristics of both organisations' mass bases, the third chapter addresses the second set of research questions elaborated above. It examines the nature and form of the production and reproduction strategies of CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers under neoliberalism as producers of both cash and subsistence crops as well as heavily dependent on labour markets. Theoretically guided by Wood's (2002) distinction between the market as an imperative or an opportunity, it examines the extent to which peasant struggles for autonomy from and within the market are represented (or not) by their organisations and the food sovereignty movement's official discourse. It will show that CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers shift household labour use between various degrees of dependence on subsistence cultivation, cash-crop production and wage employment depending on market conditions. They do so not on the basis of profit or income maximisation, but on securing long-term access to land as the foundation of autonomy. However, their interests as producers of export crops are currently not represented by the VC and its ambiguous stance on international trade. This weakens both the VC's claim to represent all marginalised peoples of the land and the power of its political project to transform the neoliberal food regime.

To address the final set of research questions, the fourth chapter investigates the political strategies employed by CIOAC and FENOCIN in their (at least stated) commitment to radical

transformation of the neoliberal food regime through use of Gramsci's concept of hegemony. It argues that the transformative potential of the food sovereignty movement depends fundamentally on state-peasant movement relations. Peasant organisations' internal structures - their class bases, leaderships and the modes of interaction between the two - and their articulation with the state's hegemonic project are fundamental for the relative success or otherwise of peasant movement struggles. It will also show that counter-hegemonic discourse does not always equate to counter-hegemonic practice, and that the discourse of food sovereignty is as much a political tool as it is an alternative socio-economic model of food and agriculture. Peasant organisations employ this powerful discourse in order to hold the state and national governments to account and demand resources for their members from the state's apparatus of legitimation. This is followed in chapter five by the conclusion which draws together the major elements of the thesis and tentatively suggests ways in which the FSM could be strengthened by addressing some of its current weaknesses.

Chapter 1. From Agrarian Reform to Food Sovereignty: CIOAC, FENOCIN and Peasant Movements in Mexico and Ecuador

Why is it that although ‘the impact of neoliberalism on pre-existing rural production and exchange relations has had varying impacts on different social classes, regions and sectors and within and between countries’ (Borras et al, 2008: 182), distinct peasant organisations across the globe have come to contest neoliberalism under the unifying banner of ‘food sovereignty’? This chapter will address this question by examining the very different agrarian structures from which CIOAC and FENOCIN have emerged. It will look at the development of both countries’ agrarian structures and how this has shaped the historical form and content of peasant struggles. It will also examine why, despite historical differences, contemporary rural movements in both Mexico and Ecuador now share ‘food sovereignty’ as their guiding principle of struggle.

Historical processes of agrarian reform have radically altered the agrarian structures of both countries, and these processes have themselves been shaped (to very different degrees and in very different ways) by peasant movements. However, policies of agrarian reform at the national level have been applied unevenly within Mexico and Ecuador across time and space as a result of regionally and historically specific constellations of class forces, state formation and capital penetration, among other factors. This chapter will explore the broad impacts of agrarian reform in both countries, leaving a more nuanced analysis of intra-regional variations within and between the sites where fieldwork was conducted to subsequent chapters. Agrarian structure here refers to the conditions of production and class reproduction in the countryside. These ‘conditions’, in turn, relate to relations of property and power that shape the production and reproduction relations of rural social classes which struggle to shape the agrarian structure in their own interests. I will examine the social classes in both countries that shaped agrarian reform processes in distinct ways as a result of the articulation between specific regional and national social formations with spatially and temporally specific processes of capitalist development.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first will summarise the major impacts of the agrarian reform eras in both countries in order to contextualise in more detail later on the emergence of food sovereignty in the neoliberal era. It will show how the class forces that

shaped and contested processes of capitalist development led to violent upheaval and destruction of a pre-capitalist landlord class in the case of Mexico, with the initiation of a state-mediated 'from below' agrarian transition. In Ecuador, on the other hand, a hegemonic pre-capitalist landlord class was able to retain its economic and political power, transforming itself into a class of capitalist farmers in a far more drawn out transition 'from above' (Byres, 2003). Using Byres (2003: 2) definition, 'agrarian transition' refers to the changes in the countryside necessary for the overall development of capitalism and to its overall dominance in a particular social formation. The distinction between 'from above' and 'from below' paths of transition is based initially on the work of Lenin. The former (the 'Junker' path in Lenin's terms) is attributed to his interpretation of capitalist development in central Europe and the 'internal metamorphosis' of pre-capitalist landed property to capitalist forms in which the landlord class retained control of the land. The latter (the American path) is based on the development of agrarian capitalism in United States which Lenin interpreted the result of class differentiation among independent producers in the absence of pre-capitalist landed property (Bernstein, 2009: 59). The second section examines the post-reform, or 'counter-reform' eras in both countries when state intervention in the peasant sector was gradually scaled back and reconfigured by both countries' governments from the 1980s onwards. The final section will explore how the impacts of neoliberalism have, despite the very different impacts of agrarian reform in Mexico and Ecuador, had similar destructive, immiserating effects on both countries' peasantries. This led to the emergence of food sovereignty in the 1990s, variously interpreted by the peasant movements of both countries, and which has become a unifying banner that articulates a rejection of, and radical alternative to, neoliberalism.

Agrarian Reforms in Mexico and Ecuador

1.1 Mexico's Agrarian Reform

Large, privately owned estates came to dominate the Mexican countryside during the late 19th Century. The dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (1876-1911), (also referred to as the Porfiriato) was responsible for the violent dispossession of indigenous populations to set up or expand haciendas, and the expansion and entrenchment of coercive labour relations. The impulse to regain community lands lost during this period drove tens of thousands of peasants to war against the dictatorship, the Porfirian restorationists of the Huerta

government (1913-1914) and the anti-Porfirian bourgeoisie of the Carranza government (1917-1920) (Markiewicz, 1993: 13). By 1910, 54 percent of Mexico's national territory was under the control of the latifundia, 20 percent by small, independent agriculturalists and ranchers, and just 6 percent by peasant communities (Ibid: 15). The 1910-1917 revolution led to the transformation of Mexico's agrarian structure but in a spatially and temporally heterogeneous way, applied as it was over territories differently shaped by Spanish colonisation and the Porfiriato's state-building project and export-led growth model⁴.

Following the Revolution, Mexico's early post-revolutionary governments were forced to enshrine agrarian reform into the new constitution and respond to peasant demands for land for the sake of social and regime stability. Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution for the first time instituted a social conception of property. This broke with the dominant Franco-American model in which private property was a sacred, natural and inviolable right (Castañeda, 2002: 36). Article 27 reflected the plurality of ideas and distinct currents that came together in the armed struggle and gave constitutional recognition to two basic models of property - private and communal. In response to peasant demands the state created the ejido form of social property that, to this day, acts as an obstacle to the generalisation of landed private property rights (Vergara-Camus, 2012: 10). Also, by restricting the subordination of land to capital it provided the peasantry with relative protection from the capitalist market, reducing forces of dispossession and proletarianisation. In terms of private property, legally defined extension limits were implemented that prevented the massive concentration of land. These limits varied depending on a number of factors including land quality, land use, and whether or not landholdings were irrigated. For example, a 300 hectare limit was established for important export crops such as sugar cane, banana and coffee while domestic crops grown on irrigated land were subject to a 100 hectare limit (Castañeda, 2002: 45).

⁴ The revolution was a complex process which will not be explored in detail here. For a history of the Mexican Revolution, see Markiewicz (1993). For an analysis of regionally distinct processes of capitalist development in Mexico stemming from Spanish colonisation and Porfirio Diaz's state building project see Williams (1990) and Davis & Figueroa (2003). In summary, colonial expansion took the route north where land was flatter, natural resources more abundant and climate more favourable than in the south (Davis & Figueroa, 2003: 90). The latifundio (large-estate) system organised by expanding frontier colonisers moved northwards, dispossessing indigenous communities and concentrating land first in the hands of Spanish colonisers and, following independence from Spain, in those of mestizo landowners. In the South where colonisation and (subsequent) capitalist social relations penetrated later and more slowly, local populations were better able to contest dispossession which, as a result, was and has been far less complete than in the north (Knight, 2002: 81). The latifundios that emerged in the south tended to take the best lands leaving the local indigenous population to make a living by moving to commercially unfavourable higher altitudes with poorer soils and generally less favourable agricultural conditions where many remain to this day.

Despite enshrining agrarian reform into the Mexican constitution in 1917, by the early 1930s rural conditions had changed very little; landlords had successfully resisted mass expropriation and the majority of the peasantry remained landless. According to official statistics, of the original 41.3 million hectares controlled by private landowners, only 6.9 million, or about 17 percent, had been expropriated by 1934. Concentration of land remained extremely high with 1.5 percent of all landowners in control of 83 percent of agricultural land nationally (Markiewicz, 1993: 84).

Between 1934 and 1940 the Cardenas administration distributed land to more peasants than all previous administrations combined. For the first time the government fundamentally challenged the power of landlords and the rights of private property, and consolidated the ejido as a permanent element of rural Mexico (Hamilton, 2011: 53). However, rather than destroying private property, Cardenas selectively challenged it and in other instances supported it. This reflected the complex prevailing agrarian structure of the time and the country's regional diversity in terms of capitalist development and landlord and peasant power. Agrarian reform was not simply responsible for the system of social property created by the state and donated to the peasantry in the form of ejidos and communities; it also created, or at least moulded, the majority of agricultural and livestock private property (Mackinlay, 2004: 120). When Cardenas' agrarian reform began the government urgently needed to find support among rural privileged classes. As a result cattle farmers and independent producers, especially in the Northern regions, obtained concessions that allowed them to begin accumulating huge tracts of land in spite of legal extension limits (Ibid: 123). The government continued to protect private property and the interests of the bourgeoisie and this allowed so called 'small proprietors' (pequeños propietarios) to possess far larger expanses of land than were granted to ejidatarios (Markiewicz, 1993: 3). The simultaneous protection of private property in areas with small or politically weak peasant populations, the attack on landlords in regions of intense peasant unrest, and the creation of social property which existed side by side with private property, indicate the intense contradictions present in Mexican society at the time, and within the (geographically and ideologically) fragmented state in the post-revolutionary period. Bourgeois class rule was not yet hegemonic, the economic and political power of the traditional landlord class remained a major obstacle to capitalist development, and the subaltern classes that had taken up arms to overthrow Porfirio Diaz were a political force whose demands had to be acknowledged and at least partially met by the nascent regime. Agrarian reform was, for the peasantry, a case of righting historical injustices by returning

to them access to land that was rightfully theirs but to which they had had been illegally and immorally dispossessed under the Porfiriato. For the Mexican regime, which legitimated itself by claiming to be the official party of the revolution, making peasants pay for access to land as was the case under many later agrarian reform programmes across Latin America, including Ecuador, was simply not an option. Cardenas' agrarian reform must therefore be understood as part of an attempt to consolidate the legitimacy of the post-revolutionary regime through sweeping redistribution, the elimination of the pre-capitalist landlord class and the creation of the pre-conditions for large scale capital accumulation. Cardenas aimed to foster a new sense of popular identification with the state and therefore lay the basis for organised mass support that was to transform both its social basis and its function (Morton, 2010: 23).

The simultaneous existence of both property types - private and social - despite apparent contradictions, were consistent with Cardenas' goal of establishing the conditions for capitalist agriculture. Through the creation of the ejido the great peasant demand for land was met in the granting of individual usufruct of parcels. The same act broke the back of the pre-capitalist landlords, the goal of the modern bourgeoisie. The whole process ensured the regime's control of the peasants as a defence against assault from conservative, reactionary sectors, cutting them off from the possibility of once again concentrating great areas of land, in the most part unproductively (Bartra, 1993: 90).

The result of the 1934-1940 period was a fundamental change to the national agrarian structure. Whereas in 1930 the ejidal sector was tiny, covering just 6.3 percent of the agricultural land and 13.4 percent of the cropland, in 1940 it had come to control 22.5 percent of the former, and 47.4 percent of the latter. By 1940 it also controlled 57.4 percent of the country's irrigable land, up from 13.1 percent in 1930. The ejido had now become entrenched against attacks from more conservative elements of the regime. (Markiewicz, 1993: 88). Under Cardenas the ejido became the central component of populist politics in the countryside, and a key element in the consolidation of an unstable regime (Ibid: 113).

To ensure the peasantry's political support, Cardenas established the '*Confederación Nacional Campesina*' (CNC) in 1938. The CNC aimed to incorporate independent peasant organisations into the regime's own organising structure, consolidating its hegemony in the countryside. In the same year the CNC claimed to have incorporated 2,400,000 peasants, now without an independent organisational base and isolated from the working class which

had its own separate corporatist structures. Corporatist institutions for the peasantry and the working class were kept apart through fear that an alliance between the poorest groups in both sectors could potentially threaten the regime (Ibid: 104). Following Cardenas' agrarian reform and his sweeping transformation of Mexico's agrarian structure, subsequent administrations reverted to favouring the private over the social sector and have since attempted to reverse the impacts of Cardenista policy, discussed in sections two and three.

1.2 Ecuador's Agrarian Reform

Ecuador's first agrarian reform law of 1964 aimed to modernise agriculture, eradicate precarious forms of labour, foster a capitalist rationality on the land, and place unexploited public lands under production (Cosse, 1984: 37). Until the second half of the 1950s, Ecuador's land tenure structure had remained largely unchanged since colonial times. In 1918 debt servitude was legally abolished but in reality continued to be the foundation of landed production until the 1960s under the '*huasipungo*'. Under this system, tenant farmers were obliged to work between four and six days per week for the landlord in exchange for the use of a small subsistence plot of land (the *huasipungo*). While specific production relations varied from hacienda to hacienda, peasants living and working under these conditions also had rights to some degree of use of hacienda resources, such as water, pasture and forest products (Blankstein & Zuvekas Jr, 1973: 74)⁵. This agrarian structure predominated in the Andean Sierra, where Ecuador's population was concentrated and production for the internal market predominated. Land concentration was extreme; the 1954 agricultural census shows that 56.7 percent of the country's agricultural land was concentrated by just over one percent of the total number of production units. Production was based on extensive cultivation and the vast majority of hacienda land, the best quality, was in possession of the landlord and destined for production for the national market. The worst quality land was divided into small subsistence plots for dependent '*huasipangueros*' (Saenz, 1980: 307). However, this data disguises huge differences between the agrarian structures of Ecuador's coastal plain and the Andes which remain to this day.

⁵ This situation was much the same in Mexico, with the specificities of peasant rights and obligations varying between individual haciendas.

Cacao plantations developed on Ecuador's coastal plain from the late 19th Century until 1920 in response to favourable geographical conditions for growing the crop at a time when European demand was expanding. National and transnational capital appropriated huge tracts of productive land, dispossessing the region's peasantry and creating a mass of surplus labour and semi-capitalist social relations on new cacao plantations (Chiriboga, 1988). A small (around 20 families) cacao oligarchy came to dominate the coast, with some landlords concentrating over 100,000 hectares each (García, 2013: 186). Rather than the tight relationship of social domination and control between landlords and peasants that characterised Andean and southern Mexican haciendas, peasants on these newly emerging coastal plantations were relatively much 'freer', or at least more independent in terms of their reproduction strategies. Andean peasants left their home regions to colonise the largely unpopulated coastal plain on landlords' uncultivated estates. Wage labour relations developed as a result of labour scarcity, a condition that made it difficult to fully establish semi-feudal social relations tying producers to the hacienda. In order to attract the labour necessary to maximise production it was necessary to offer workers better conditions than those on Sierra haciendas, and to also pay them wages in cash (Redclift, 1978: 44). The imperatives of the capitalist market began to increasingly establish themselves in the early 1910s following the development of massive cacao plantations on Africa's western coast financed by British capital. This reduced world cacao prices and forced Ecuadorian plantation owners to operate under capitalist rationality and increase productive efficiency in order to remain viable producers of the bean. This included placing all available land under production, leading to the expropriation of peasants occupying subsistence plots within the hacienda and the conversion of some of these peasants into wage labourers on capitalist plantations (Chiriboga, 1988: 170). This contrasted with landlords in the Sierra supplying the national market, relatively independent from the capitalist world system and retaining pre-capitalist, extensive production relations. Until around the 1950s they did not confront the imperative to improve production and efficiency.

The pre-capitalist landlord class in the Sierra's central and northern valleys began to undergo processes of class differentiation from the late 1950s as a result of capitalist development on a world scale and the growing dependence of Ecuador's pre-capitalist haciendas' on the world market (Guerrero, 1988: 90). By the latter half of the 1950s, pre-capitalist market integration had become simply unsustainable economically for a growing number of landlords, leading to huasipungo liquidation and the generalisation of wage labour relations as capitalist efficiency became an imperative for survival. Industrial growth

- at 6-8.5 percent per year between 1960 and 1972 - had begun to take off from the late 1950s and the urbanisation that accompanied it (Velasco, 1988) led to increased demand for food in industrial centres. An increasing percentage of national demand for basic foodstuffs was being met through imports as inefficient haciendas in the Sierra could simply not meet growing national demand (Velasco, 1988). They were increasingly unable to compete with the prices of food imports and so were forced to modernise in order to survive. This involved mechanisation and the uptake of emerging green revolution technologies purchased from the world market. Commodity relations were thus internalised within the hacienda as the need to sell in order to provide the monetary income to continually improve production and lower unit costs came to condition survival. Market imperatives forced capitalist efficiency as population growth and capitalist development in the rest of the economy increased the opportunity cost of the land (Guerrero, 1988: 111). The huasipungo became an obstacle to capitalist accumulation and efficiency as well as a social problem within the hacienda; peasant demands for huasipungo expansion were increasingly rejected in the face of capitalising hacienda owners needing to place all hacienda land under production for the market. This is why many hacienda owners wanted to generalise wage labour in the 1960s and relieve themselves of their responsibilities towards huasipungo populations (Martínez, 1984: 86) (See Barksy, 1980 and Archetti & Stolen, 1988, for more in depth analysis of capitalist development on Ecuador's sierra haciendas).

The promulgation of the Agrarian Reform and Colonisation Law (*Ley de Reforma Agraria y Colonización*) on 11 July 1964 explicitly combined both reform and colonisation, the latter implemented far more extensively than the former for reasons elaborated below. Rather than addressing the country's massively unequal land distribution its central objective was to end all forms of precarious land tenure, namely the huasipungo, but also absentee landlordism. 'Absentee landholdings' or lands 'not efficiently exploited' were to be redistributed to a new class of 'independent' - formerly huasipungo, or 'precarious' - peasants in the form of cooperatives. These cooperatives were created by the state and were to be financed through state loans to this new class of independent peasants. The government created IERAC (*Instituto Ecuatoriano de Reforma Agraria y Colonización* / Ecuadorian Institute of Agrarian Reform and Colonisation), a semi-autonomous public body that would administer the reform process. Land to be redistributed by IERAC included: unused public land ceded to the institute under the law; 'deficiently utilised' private land subject to expropriation; and land left unexploited for ten years that would then revert to

IERAC. The law also established maximum holding limits of 2,500 hectares on the coast and 800 hectares in the sierra, in addition to 1,000 hectares of pasture in either region. These limits were much higher than those implemented by Cardenas in Mexico (see above), allowing Ecuadorian landlords to concentrate much more land than their Mexican counterparts. Also, in contrast to Cardenas' no compensation policy in Mexico, Ecuador's expropriated landlords would be paid with newly created government agrarian reform bonds and be sold on to beneficiaries at a price fixed in accordance with its productive capacity and beneficiaries' ability to pay. The Ecuadorian peasantry did not have the political power of its Mexican counterpart to force expropriations without landlord compensation.

The impacts of the reform on inequality of land access were minimal. Little was done to enforce maximum extension limits and IERAC only intervened in 50 haciendas from 1964-1969, with only 14 of these interventions involving actual expropriation (Blankstein & Zuvekas Jr, 1973: 82). The gini coefficient for land inequality fell from 0.86 in 1954 to 0.85 in 1974, only a very small improvement in overall land distribution considering the scale of the problem (Zapata, Ruiz & Brassel, 2008: 23).

Table one shows that most progress was made in the liquidation of the huasipungo, and by 1969, 88.4 percent of the estimated number of huasipungo families had become landowners. However, the average size of their plot was only 3.5 hectares (Ibid: 81). For these peasants agrarian reform had limited itself to handing them a small plot, almost always less than they effectively had access to before (Cosse, 1984: 45). The reform, while giving them land in the form of free private property titles that formalised access to the (usually poor quality) subsistence plots at the edge of the hacienda they had previously worked, at the same time denied them access to what were previously communal access resources, namely pastures, forests and water. As a result, most were materially worse off following the reform than before it and far more exposed to forces of dispossession and proletarianisation than their Mexican counterparts occupying land under the ejidal system.

Table 2. Goals and accomplishments of agrarian reform and colonisation projects in Ecuador: 1964-1969.

Projects	Goals		Accomplishments	
	Families	Hectares	Families	Hectares
Agrarian Reform:				
Abolishment of huasipungos	19,459	235,000	17,026	60,093
Other redistributions of land	37,041	425,000	10,831	92,022
Subtotal	56,500	660,000	27,857	152,115
Colonisation:				
Legalisation of property holdings and new adjudications on colonisation lands	25,500	709,000	10,542	364,934
Total:	82,000	1,369,000	38,399	517,049

(Taken from: Blankstein & Zuvekas Jr, 1973: 81. Original source: Goals - *Plan general de desarrollo economic y social*, tomo II, libro sexto, capitulo 2, pages 80 and 107; accomplishments - IERAC unpublished data).

In terms of land area, colonisation took precedence over agrarian reform from the outset. Table one also shows that of the 517,049 hectares in total that was handed over to beneficiaries during the period 1964-1969, 364,934 hectares (just over 70 percent) was done so in the form of colonisation of uninhabited (typically Amazon) zones. As a result of the 1964 law one fundamental characteristic of the country's agrarian structure - the concentration of land, political power and income by landlords - remained unchanged, while another - the huasipungo and the generalisation of non-capitalist production relations in the sierra - was transformed. It forced an accelerated process of (semi-) proletarianisation as the small marginal plots could not sustain a growing peasant population. Population growth on haciendas had previously been incorporated into the hacienda system via huasipango expansions granted by landlords in response to peasant pressure. Landlords had now rid themselves of their obligations towards huasipangueros and established capitalist enterprises on the best hacienda lands. Over time, population growth led to a process of fragmentation of already small plots, further eroding the capacity of household units to meet basic subsistence requirements (Breton, 2013: 96-97).

There was a strong contraction of labour demand in the Andes due to mechanisation of remaining haciendas which further increased pressure on peasant holdings and processes of (semi)proletarianisation and impoverishment.

If, as some writers argue (Jordan, 2003; Barksy, 1980; Zapata, Ruiz & Brassel, 2008), the 1964 law was not influenced by the country's weak, unorganised peasantry, the results of the law itself were to radicalise and mobilise peasants. The law had made peasant reproduction even *more* precarious than under pre-capitalist, so-called 'precarious' forms of land tenancy. This radicalised the peasantry, now better able to organise resistance as 'independent' subjects than as hacienda bonded huasipangueros, and contributed to the eventual implementation of Ecuador's second, and more radical, agrarian reform law of 1973.

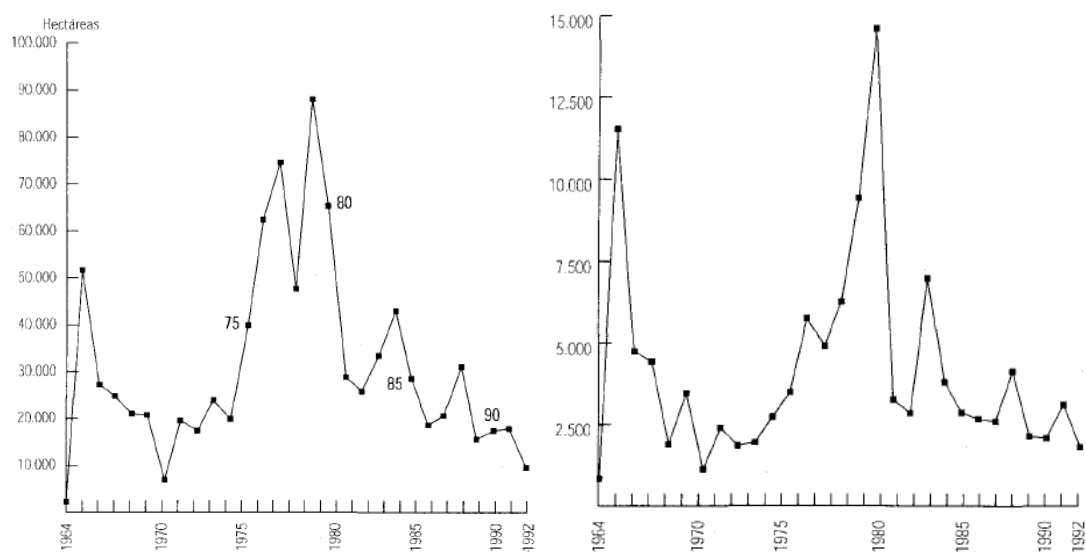
Despite the emergence of an 'independent' peasantry it was not yet strong enough to directly influence state policy as an organised political force. In 1965 FETAP (*Federación de Trabajadores Agropecuarios* / Federation of Agricultural Workers), which would later become FENOCIN, was established in the Central and Northern Andes to force the implementation of the 1964 Agrarian Reform Law in its territories⁶. The organisation worked especially in the provinces of Chimborazo, Imbabura and Pichincha where it distributed land to around 3,000 campesinos from 70 haciendas. At the end of 1965 it affiliated 10 agrarian unions and 75 associations within a pyramidal organisational structure inherited from urban unionising (FENOCIN, 1999: 24). In 1967 FETAP extended to the coast, the province of Rios especially where 44 organisations integrated, and in Guayas seven more joined. Seeing the lack of progress with reforms as a result of IERAC's underfunding, bureaucratic and government indifference to the interests of the peasantry and the complicity of state authorities with landowners, FETAP's coastal organisations pressured for radicalisation of the struggle and demanded peasant participation in shaping and implementing agrarian reform policy. Pressure from coastal organisations led to the displacement of FETAP's original conservative tendencies as struggles radicalised. This was manifested at FETAP's third national congress in November 1968 where it was decided to rename the organisation FENOC (*Federación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas* / National Federation of Peasant Organisations) and reiterate the state's obligation to

⁶ In 1938 the Ecuadorian Confederation of Catholic Workers (CEDOC) was set up as a joint initiative between the Catholic Church and the Conservative Party to create a union distanced from Leftist tendencies. In the 1950s, under the perceived threat of Communism, CEDOC turned its attention to the countryside and constituted FETAP which would later free itself from conservative and Catholic influences and ally with the Ecuadorian Socialist Party in 1977 (Altmann, 2014: 5).

(re)distribution. The organisation demanded support for the newly constituted independent peasant sector and regulation of lands leased to its coastal rice growers (Ibid: 25).

The 1964 Law had raised peasant hopes of revolutionising Ecuador's agrarian structure and improving their lives through democratisation of land access. The failure to deliver on these promises intensified and generalised a crisis of peasant reproduction and spawned new organisations fighting for land. The first agrarian reform law had achieved its main ends for those most responsible for its promulgation - modernising landlord fractions in the Northern and Central Andes and the emerging industrial bourgeoisie. The abolition of the huasipango was rapid and, once complete, signified the end of agrarian reform in their eyes. Figure one shows how the number beneficiaries and of total hectares legalised through agrarian reform fell significantly following the immediate aftermath of the 1964 law's implementation, only to rise significantly once more following the second law of 1973.

Figure 1. Total number of hectares legalised and total number of beneficiaries annually in Ecuador under agrarian reform.



(taken from: Gondard & Mazurek, 2001: 17 & 18)

As shown in figure one, from the legalisation of over 50,000 hectares annually in 1965, this area had fallen to under 10,000 by 1970. The initial wave of legalisations had formalised peasants' access to the subsistence plots they had held as huasipungueros in the interests of modernising landlords wishing to rid themselves of responsibility towards huasipango populations. It is important to note that from 1964 to the mid-1970s, colonisation remained an important and stable element of state policy, but was not enough to eliminate growing

calls for action to be taken to redistribute land in the sierra under a comprehensive agrarian reform that had yet to be implemented. Between 1964 and 1974, the average land area legalised via colonisation was 65,983 annually, with an average of 1,820 beneficiaries per year, the vast majority in the Amazon region (Gondard & Mazurek, 2001: 22).

In 1968 former president Velasco Ibarra had returned to the presidency following a successful populist campaign. However, once in office he governed from the right, effectively ending the agrarian reform process and implementing sweeping austerity measures. This led to widespread social unrest and by 1970 Ibarra's government was cracking under the pressure. In 1972 a military coup led by General Rodriguez Lara seized control of the country and sent Ibarra into exile (Pineo, 2007: 178). Although Lara's military government may have proposed a radicalisation and deepening of the reform process when it came to power in 1972, the 1973 law in reality represented a counter-reform and the eventual termination of agrarian reform as a policy intended, at least rhetorically, to redistribute land, power and wealth in the countryside. IERAC's underfunding had combined with landlords' entrenched political and economic power to limit the redistributive impacts of the first reform law. The combination of growing social unrest and the discovery of oil in 1967 triggered the military government of Rodriguez Lara to push for a sweeping agrarian reform. It was hoped that this could incorporate a growing and potentially destabilising peasant population, increasingly impoverished through lack of land access and employment opportunities, into Ecuador's social and economic development. However, proposals for the new law led to dispute between the reformist government and the powerful Chamber of Agriculture, a state body representing conservative landlords of the Sierra (Martz, 1987: 120). The result was a much watered down law than the military government had initially promised when it first took power. According to Guillermo Maldonado-Lince, Minister of Agriculture from 1972-1977, the military government had planned to stipulate in the law that land had to fulfil a 'social function', with lands subject to expropriation that did not do so. Lands would not be fulfilling their social function if they were:

- a) Deficiently exploited
- b) Not conserving renewable natural resources
- c) Not under the direct responsibility and administration of the landowner
- d) Being 'hoarded'
- e) Not fulfilling the requirements of the country's labour laws

The first of these functions was the most contentious between the government and the Chamber of Agriculture. The former had in 1972 stated a commitment to expropriate holdings in which at least 80 percent of the land area was not under production, with a level of productivity not meeting the Ministry of Agriculture's average measures and/or without infrastructure investment to allow its productive exploitation (Maldonado-Lince, 1979: 25-27). However, as a result of on-going confrontations between the Chamber of Agriculture and the Lara government the 'social function' of land was redefined to suit the interests of landlords and came to be interpreted as a productivity and efficiency issue, rather than one based on the distribution of resources. This demonstrates the political power that landlords continued to wield within the state apparatus. According to the Chamber, landlords had already begun to modernise and were now being threatened with calls for redistribution that would destroy the agricultural base of the country and threaten the viability of Lara's plan to industrialise Ecuador (Ayala, 1998: 163).

FETAP/FENOC was a central protagonist in channelling growing rural unrest through the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s and won important victories for its members in terms of the break-up of inefficient estates passed into peasant hands (FENOCIN, 1999: 25). However, these were relatively isolated victories and neither FETAP nor the national peasant movement as a whole could prevent landlord interests prevailing and reversing the more revolutionary elements of Lara's proposals. From a project designed to break landlord control of the land and incorporate an increasingly impoverished and dangerous peasantry into oil-funded national development, the 1973 Reform Law had become focused on promoting capitalist development of large scale agriculture. From this point on productivity would trump redistribution as the central objective of state rural policy. The aim of democratising landed property was replaced by that of pressuring all producers to produce more efficiently, with efficiency interpreted as large-scale, green revolution agriculture.

Agrarian Counter-Reform in Mexico and Ecuador and the Onset of Neoliberalism

1.3 The Scaling Back of Agrarian Reform in Mexico

From 1940 to the mid-1960s there was a significant slowdown in the agrarian reform process nationally as large-scale, state-subsidised commercial agriculture was promoted and thrived. The mass of the peasantry had been incorporated into the PRM (the ruling '*Partido de la Revolución Mexicana*', later renamed the '*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*' [PRI] in 1946) via the CNC through Cardenas' massive land redistribution programme, dampening unrest and institutionalising direct channels of negotiation and resource distribution between the state and the social sector. This to a great extent legitimated the state in the countryside and created the social stability necessary for the bourgeois regime to consolidate its political power. For around 30 years following the end of Cardenas' presidency, legal measures⁷ increasingly favoured private property and policy tended to promote the productive development of private capitalist units to the detriment of the increasingly maligned social sector. It became clear immediately following the end of Cardenas' term that productive goals were now to subsume social objectives. Mexico began to embark upon a model of import-substitution industrialisation (ISI) as imports from the USA, now at war, dried up. This led to a growing divergence between what Bartra (1993: 34) terms Mexico's 'two agricultures'; the state-supported development of the capitalist (private) sector fostered the concentration of capital, land and mechanisation and inevitably assisted the erosion of the social/ejidal sector which was left under-capitalised, under supported, and increasingly unable to compete with the modern sector. Rather than forming the basis of Mexico's agricultural sector as it had been conceived by Cardenas, the ejido became a necessary institution for the regime to manage the social costs of capitalist development in the countryside. By effectively slowing down the process of proletarianisation and decomposition of the peasantry through allowing the social sector to keep hold of its own means of subsistence, the ejido system could retain a mass of the peasantry that neither agriculture nor industry could absorb, thereby reducing the potential for rural unrest.

⁷ The '*Ley de Tierras Baldías, Nacionales y Desmasais*' came into effect on 30 December 1950 under the Alemán government and consolidated the legal process of redistribution of state-held national lands to individuals. Again in 1962, the '*Ley de Colonización Privada*' established that national lands occupied and solicited before 1963 could be titled freely to individuals (Ramos, 1992: 74-75).

During the ISI period (1940-1980) Mexico's economy grew at six percent per year, the so-called 'Mexican miracle', in which the one-party regime not only consolidated but also became extremely centralised and powerful. Investment in agriculture focused on massive irrigation projects in the north and north-west of the country creating an important agro-export sector; between 1940 and 1945, 15 percent of all federal government investment and almost 90 percent of agricultural investment went into creating these huge irrigation districts (Foley, 1991: 45). As state investment poured into the development of private northern irrigated zones state support for the ejidal sector, which predominated in the centre and south of the country, was progressively withdrawn (Hamilton, 2011: 80). Population growth in the social sector combined with the slowdown of land redistribution led to growing division and fragmentation of social property, depeasantry and (semi) proletarianisation that has continued to this day. However, the state's attempts to free itself from obligations to the peasantry did not go uncontested. Independent peasant movements emerged in the centre and south of the country and the government responded with a combination of coercion, co-optation of leaders, partial concessions and, as a last resort, repression to demands that it could not contain or control (Ibid: 85-87). As a result of peasant resistance the regime could never abandon land redistribution and the social sector. It kept with its revolutionary rhetoric of social justice for the peasantry and commitment to the ejido despite overwhelming state focus on the private sector. It was forced to make concessions to the peasantry, sometimes minimal, sometimes significant, depending on the strength of national and regional peasant mobilisations at different historical conjunctures.

By the beginning of the 1960s agricultural growth, booming since 1940, entered into crisis. Commercial agriculture concentrated in the north, although highly productive, was based on the production of export, industrial, and 'luxury' rather than domestic crops. The peasant/social sector, responsible for the production of the vast majority of Mexico's staple crops, had continued to deteriorate, decapitalised and abandoned as it had been by the state. Domestic food demand was increasingly outstripping supply as industrialisation continued apace. It was within this context that in 1961 the CCI (*Central Campesina Independiente* / Independent Campesino Central) - precursor to the CIOAC - emerged as the first post-revolutionary national peasant organisation outside of the corporatist control of the official party. From the end of Cardenas' administration to this point the state had managed minimal land redistribution and colonisation as a social pressure valve, combined

with selective acts of repression and the CNC as the dominant corporatist force in the countryside on which the peasantry depended for any chance of receiving land (Hernández, 2011: 28). However, Hernández (2011: 31) argues that 'everyday forms of resistance' (Scott, 1985) were ever present among landless and land poor peasants excluded from the state's corporatist structures (namely the CNC). By 1958 this resistance became increasingly overt taking the form of land invasions in response to growing inequality, injustice and the loss of patience and hope that land could be acquired via institutional channels. There was also growing internal inconformity within the CNC which faced growing criticism from within its ranks for 'agrarista' abandonment, caciquismo, and lack of action over the stagnation of agrarian reform and the change in direction of rural policy in favour of the private sector. This triggered the formation of the CCI as a critical breakaway section of the CNC (Ibid: 28-34). The organisation profiled itself as an alternative pole in the representation and intermediation of the peasantry while maintaining a centralist organisational model inherited from the CNC. Its central organisational principle of associative independence from the state and political parties articulated with a wave of dissent nationally, both rural and urban, that centred on criticism of the PRI project - its failings to meet the promises of the revolution, corporatism, repression, lack of democracy, growing inequality and economic slowdown. In the countryside it began to represent a serious threat to CNC/PRI hegemony (Ibid: 57-59).

From mid-1961 to 1964 the CCI maintained its position of independence with regard to the government. It managed to unite sporadic unrest as an independent national movement and began to increasingly challenge the established order and associated state corporatism - it had to be neutralised (Ibid: 67). In 1964 internal problems within the CCI regarding strategy and ideology led to the expulsion, with police support, of eleven 'communist' leaders, including one of the founders of the CCI itself, Ramon Danzos Palomino. As a result the organisation effectively split into two groups; '*CCI Roja*', headed by Danzos Palomino, linked to the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), and which would later become CIOAC; and '*CCI Blanca*', headed by the less radical factions which, by the end of the decade, reintegrated itself back into the PRI (Terán, 2010: 38).

The impetus to renew the regime's commitment to agrarian reform strengthened following the 1968 police massacre of students in Mexico City. In an attempt to restore credibility in the countryside the Echeverría administration (1970-1976) focused on land redistribution and the ejido to increase productivity (Ibid: 96). However, this focus was on redistribution

to a very particular fraction of the peasantry - the better endowed (economically and climatologically) and more market-oriented fraction that could benefit from increased market integration (Fox, 1985: 38), and not the already marginalised, fragmented, increasingly proletarianised peasants that predominated in much of the south of the country. In the context of the Echeverría government's professed support for land redistribution, 1975 and 1976 saw peasant land invasions across the country (Foley, 1991: 45), many led by the CCI Roja. The invasions were so widespread that they forced the expropriation of almost 100 thousand hectares of irrigated land in Sonora and the collectivisation of over 600 ejidos nationwide (Ibid: 47). Despite these victories for peasant agriculture they were still isolated events in the overall context of Mexico's agrarian transformation and could not reverse the tendential ruin of the peasant economy.

As a response to rural protest and the PRI's growing legitimacy crisis a whole set of interconnected state owned enterprises (SOEs) were established or restructured to 'assist' the ejidal sector and its productive development in the 1960s and 1970s. Mediated through the CNC and based on Green Revolution technologies, these included CONASUPO, a storage, distribution and marketing parastatal for basic grains; FERTIMEX for the provision of subsidised fertilisers; BANRURAL to deliver subsidised rural credit; and PRONASE for subsidised seeds. Through these institutions the state could intervene directly in community decision making and politically channel access to public resources and political participation. The dependency on compensatory resources was a powerful instrument for the state to establish and maintain control over ejidatarios, especially those thinking about joining independent organisations such as the CCI/CIOAC. This dependency also allowed the state to better manage processes of proletarianisation resulting from Mexico's capitalist development that could potentially destabilise the regime. Ejidal subsidies held in check social differentiation between and within ejidos as better entrepreneurs could not accumulate land and the worst could not lose it (Foley, 1995: 72). With the support of these state institutions the ejidal sector, extraordinarily heterogeneous as it was (and still is), came to shelter and conceal extremely unproductive, pauperised and/or proletarianised sectors of the peasantry. This allowed Mexico's capitalist agricultural sector to concentrate capital and land, especially in the irrigated north of the country.⁸

From 1976 to 1992 state-support for the peasant sector was gradually cut back and land redistribution significantly slowed down, applied sporadically in isolated cases as a political

⁸ In practice, illegal sale/leasing of ejido land was and is widespread, but its illegality by nature has prevented significant accumulation by more entrepreneurial ejidatarios.

tool to manage unrest and more often than not with poor quality land and no attempt to provide the necessary inputs to make it produce. This strategy was particularly effective in demobilising CIOAC and other groups demanding land by (re)distributing it among the most militant factions whose attention and energies then shifted to the struggle to make a living from land won with little or no state support. The progressive weakening of the state's commitment to redistribution from the Lopez Portillo administration (1976-1982) onwards culminated in the official termination of agrarian reform in 1992. The SAM programme (*Sistema Alimentario Mexicano*) was the cornerstone of Lopez Portillo's agrarian policy, and promised to increase staples production to achieve national food self-sufficiency in basic grains and revitalise the traditional state-peasant alliance without the need for redistribution. However, the distribution of SAM fell largely to the private sector and the highly capitalised peasant classes. The result of state intervention therefore was actually to widen the gap between small and large producers, while increasing the power of agribusiness to block most subsequent reform initiatives (Fox, 1993: 57-86).

The SAM programme was eventually disbanded when Miguel de la Madrid came to power in 1982 in the context of the Mexican debt crisis; by August 1982 Mexico could no longer service its external debt which stood at US\$ 80 billion, 42 percent of GDP. In November the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided Mexico with US\$3.84 billion in credit over the next three years to keep up with debt repayments on the condition of adopting a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) that forced the government to implement stringent austerity measures, reduce trade barriers and open the economy to foreign investment (Cline, 1982). De la Madrid officially ruled out land redistribution as a solution to Mexico's agricultural problems and further cut productive supports for the social sector. SOEs geared towards the productive development of the peasant sector began to undergo processes of privatisation and/or dismantling.

Before discussing its official termination in section three, it is useful to examine the quantitative results of over 70 years of agrarian reform nationally on the eve of the 1992 changes to Mexico's Constitution. Table two, taken from national agricultural census data of 1991, shows the total number of land holdings and area owned for the peasant (community and ejido), private and mixed sectors in rural Mexico.

Table 3. Land holdings and area owned for the peasant (community and ejido), private and mixed sectors

Sectors	Number of Holdings	Percent	Area (millions of hectares)	Percent
Community-based	3,040,495	66.3	103.29	59.0
Private	1,410,742	30.8	71.69	40.9
Mixed	133,912	2.9	0.13	0.1
Totals	4,585,149	100	175.11	100

(Source: VII Censo Ejidal Nacional Agropecuario y Ejidal: Taken from: Toledo, 1996: 253)

Despite 50 years of post-Cardenas governments' attempts to reverse agrarian reform and promote private, capitalist agriculture, in 1991 59 percent of Mexico's total agricultural land area was constituted as social property under peasant production and made up over 66 percent of the total number of landholdings nationally. However, this national level data masks important regional variations, especially those between the irrigated, capitalised, private agriculture that characterises the north of the country and the rain-fed, pauperised, ejidal/community production that characterises much of the south of the country. Table three demonstrates this contrast in terms of the size of the rural population and mean size of individual holdings for four northern and three southern states.

Table 4. Area of landholdings and producer numbers in Northern and Southern States of Mexico.

	State	Total land area under agricultural/forest production (Ha)	Total number of producers	Mean size of individual landholding (Ha)
Northern States	Nuevo Leon	2,270,099	34,171	66.4
	Sinaloa	1,783,466	72,999	24.4
	Tamaulipas	3,197,919	54,807	58.3
	Sonora	8,439,571	32,063	263.2
Southern States	Chiapas	3,059,530	406,599	7.5
	Guerrero	2,029,012	275,899	7.4
	Oaxaca	2,030,507	354,201	5.7

(Source: INEGI 2007, Censo Agropecuario)

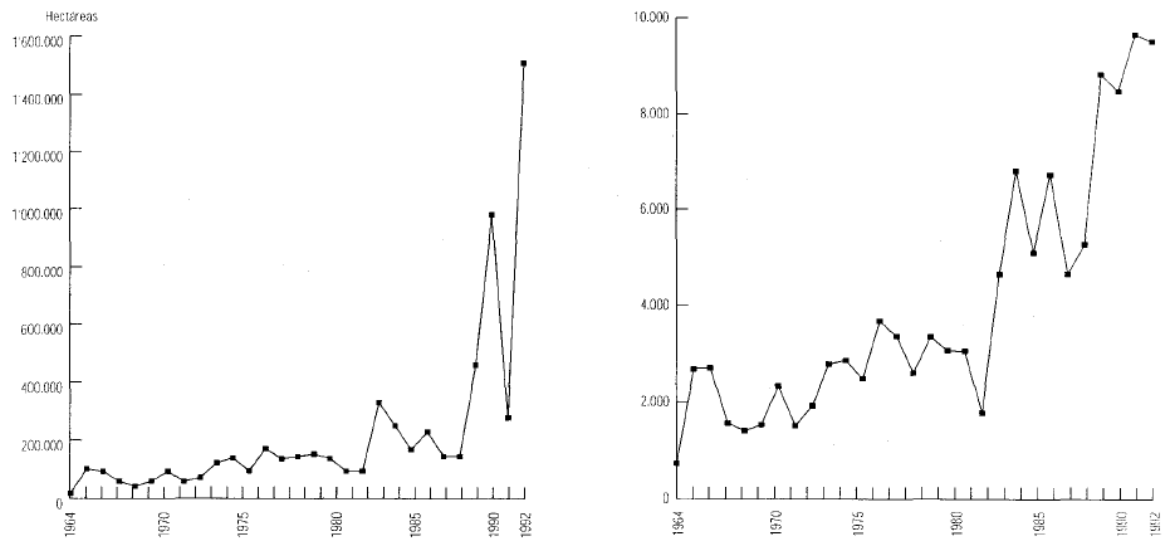
The data in table three shows that larger landholdings tend to be found in Mexico's northern border states while on average much smaller landholdings and a more populous rural sector characterises the southern parts of the country. Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca are the three poorest states in the republic while those of the north shown in the table are some of the wealthiest. In the latter, private property is the predominant form of land ownership and has historically been favoured through access to state subsidies of various direct and indirect forms. In the three southern states in the table social property predominates which, as we have seen, has become increasingly fragmented, exhausted and unviable, left to slowly decompose and attenuate the potentially socially destabilising effects of capitalist development.

1.4 The Scaling Back of Agrarian Reform in Ecuador

When the military government handed over power in 1979 it was the final point in a long process of agrarian reform that was uneven, sporadic, and ultimately minimal in the face of strong organised resistance from traditional landlord elites. From the 1980s onwards the role of the state would gradually be transferred to the market (Jordan, 2003: 298) and the importance of colonisation to meet peasant demands for land would take on increasing importance.

The 1973 reform law in reality represented another victory for the embedded landlord class and yet another nail in the coffin of an already minimal land reform in terms of its redistributive effects. It would not resolve the problem of growing peasant unrest as population pressure on peasant holdings continued to grow and expulsion of landless/land-poor producers into already saturated urban labour markets continued to threaten social stability. With 'agrarian reform' now focused on the capitalist development of agriculture, the Lara government and subsequent administrations would have to address this problem without tackling the country's massive inequality of land ownership. Colonisation of the Amazon region was seen as the solution. Figure two demonstrates the growing dependence on colonisation as a state policy to meet demands for land from an expanding peasant population.

Figure 2. Annual surface area legalised and average number of beneficiaries per year from colonisation in Ecuador.



(taken from: Gondard & Mazurek, 2001: 21)

Figure two shows a marked increase in both the land area legalised under colonisation and the number of colonisation beneficiaries from 1983 onwards, four years after the end of military rule and the effective termination of state-led agrarian reform as a means for peasants to gain access to land. Despite the emphasis on colonisation, the policy has not solved the problem of growing pressure on peasant holdings and the related processes of fragmentation of production units and (semi-) proletarianisation.

FENOC was becoming increasingly frustrated with continued land concentration despite successive administrations' stated commitment to redistribution. In 1975, faced with the vacillation of the military government, the organisation launched its radical motto 'with the law, without the law, we will carry out agrarian reform' (*'Con ley, sin ley, haremos la reforma agraria'*). The radicalisation of FENOC's demands evidenced the growing influence of the PSE (Ecuadorian Socialist Party) within its ranks. That same year an acute struggle within the organisation took place between socialist and Christian democrat factions, the latter of which had, since FENOC's inception, dominated its leadership. This conflict was mainly ideological between radical and conciliatory positions regarding how to engage with the government to bring about land reform and whether extra institutional tactics such as land invasions should form part of FENOC's strategy (FENOCIN, 1999: 37). By 1977 the PSE supported leadership controlled the organisation. However, the use of state colonisation policies in the Amazon demobilised Ecuador's increasingly militant and powerful peasant

movement, ensuring that landlord control of the best land in the Andes and on the coast remained intact.

The military government used oil revenues to increase state expenditure in the agricultural sector, up from 2.1 percent of the share of total state budget in 1972 to 10.3 percent in 1975. However, the distribution of this budget only deepened existing rural inequality, with provision of rural infrastructure and benefits of public expenditures highly correlated with prevailing distribution of wealth and land. In 1974, over 80 percent of credits were received by large (>100Ha) and medium (5-100Ha) producers, the rest left to smallholders (<5Ha), or around two-thirds of the country's total number of producers (Vos, 1988; 26). Those already most impoverished, with least access to land (and mostly poor quality land), were unable to access credit and benefited least from state agricultural policy. They were also the group that produced the country's staple crops. Similarly to Mexico, domestic crop production had stagnated as state policy favoured a private sector dedicated primarily to exports. Staples production, on the other hand, was carried out predominantly by decapitalised small producers, forced to produce on increasingly fragmented, marginal holdings with soil exhaustion and increasing proletarianisation growing issues (Treakle, 1998; 221-222).

The high oil prices that prevailed during the 1970s had allowed the Ecuadorian state to significantly increase both spending and borrowing. The government had prioritised social spending that had delivered health and education programmes to some of the country's poorest inhabitants, but events of the 1980s, internal and external, sent Ecuador into economic crisis. The combined effects of the debt crisis, the 1985-1986 oil price collapse and a massive earthquake in 1987 that destroyed the main pipeline and shut down oil production for five months led to a disastrous economic decline. With external debts amounting to 37 percent of GDP, Ecuador was forced to accept a structural adjustment programme from the IMF in 1983. Most rural and industrial subsidies were reduced or eliminated, price controls and import quotas were removed and exports promoted. State spending was drastically cut, the Sucre (Ecuador's then currency) devalued and interest rates were increased. During the adjustment period (from the early-1980s to the early-1990s) Ecuador went into recession and per capita income fell 32 percent from US\$ 1,444 in 1982 to \$977 in 1988. Indigenous peasants were particularly hard hit as prices of basic goods, namely food and fuel, rose dramatically while crop prices fell and credit sources dwindled further (only accessible anyway to more 'viable'/market integrated producers,

never an option for the majority of the Andes' indigenous peasants), driving many rural inhabitants to the burgeoning cities and abroad in search of a means of survival that remaining on the land could no longer provide them (Treakle, 1998; 221-222).

The End of Agrarian Reform

1.5 Neoliberalism and the Rise of Food Sovereignty

Up to this point in the analysis of Mexico and Ecuador's agrarian structures we have seen that the agrarian reform processes and rural transitions in both countries have historically been very different, the former characterised as far more 'from below' than the latter's very much 'from above' nature. However, the application of neoliberal policies from the early 1980s onwards - culminating in the 1992 and 1994 agrarian laws in Ecuador and Mexico respectively - has seen the increasing convergence of the two in terms of the neoliberalisation of rural policy and its impacts on the production and reproduction strategies of various subaltern rural classes. The official termination of agrarian reform, the specific nature and objectives of the 1992 and 1994 laws, and ongoing neoliberal restructuring has led to the rise of food sovereignty as a unifying discourse for diverse peasant movements in Mexico, Ecuador, and across Latin America struggling against the neoliberal model.

Salinas' 1992 agrarian law was the most drastic and polemical characteristic of Mexico's neoliberal turn in the rural sector (Hamilton, 2011: 121). Without doubt, the most controversial element of the new law was the amendment of Article 27 of the Constitution which had, since the revolution, promised land to the landless and restoration of land to the displaced. Under the 1992 amendments, designed to encourage private investment and 'modernise' the countryside, specifically lands occupied under social property regimes, the following changes stand out:

- a) The state is no longer obligated to continue land reform or provide land
- b) The Mexican government has no power to expropriate land
- c) Ejidatarios now have the option to buy their own ejido, to lease it, transfer it, or use it as collateral for loans or to mortgage it (previously ejido lands were inalienable, non-transferable and could not be leased or mortgaged).

- d) Ejidatarios may now form associations or joint ventures with commercial groups.
- e) Extension limits for private property were significantly relaxed; commercial associations can now accumulate 25 times the extension limit of individual private properties corresponding to a region and land use criteria (Castillo, 2004: 2-3 & 243).

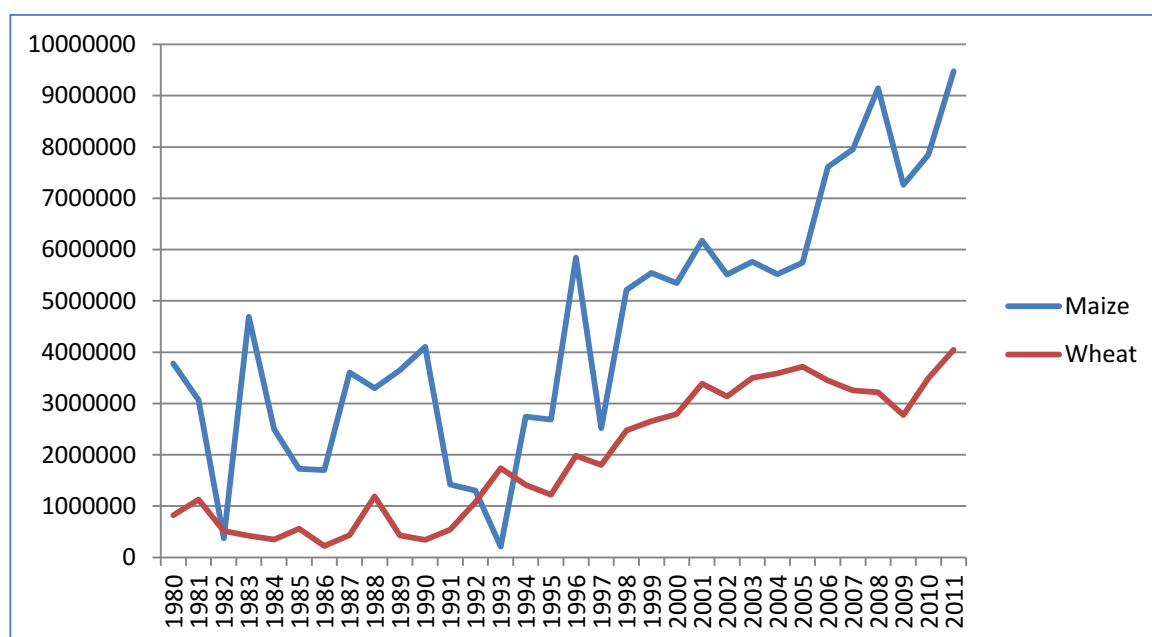
The main thrust of the reforms aimed to create a fully capitalist land market by encouraging the dissolution of the ejidal sector through a combination of legal reforms to the social property regime and gradually withdrawing productive support for the peasant sector⁹. The reform of Article 27 was the culmination of a long process of de facto cancellation of land distribution and the ultimate indication that the state was once and for all abandoning the peasant model (Vergara-Camus, 2012; 15). Within six years (1988-1994) the institutional framework of rural Mexico was completely transformed in order to promote a model of economic growth based entirely on the market and private investment (Appendini, 1998: 25). The goal of national food self-sufficiency present during the ISI period was abandoned as government deemed that it had become a cheaper and more effective policy to import food rather than support an inefficient staples producing peasantry. The same logic of focusing on comparative advantage was applied in Ecuador where state policy similarly abandoned support for peasant staples production to focus increased support on large-scale, privately capitalised production of export crops.

Ecuador's 1994 Agrarian Development Law was backed by conservative landlords organised in the Chamber of Agriculture and fractions within political parties that favoured economic liberalisation. Its main objective was to achieve state guarantee of private property and, like Mexico's 1992 law, the generalisation of private property as the basis of rural production with guarantees for landlords that their holdings could not be expropriated. IERAC was converted to INDA (*Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agrario* / National Institute of Agrarian Development) in 1995, signifying not only the end of land redistribution (Guerrero Cazar & Ospina, 2003: 20), but also an effort on the part of the state to decouple the question of rural development from that of the concentration of land and wealth. In addition to the cancellation of land reform, the new agrarian laws of both countries removed the major institutional obstacles to efficient land transfers in an attempt to create capitalist-efficient land markets.

⁹ Despite the state's attempt to create a fully capitalist land market, a combination of legal safeguards on ejidal property and ongoing rural crisis has prevented the rapid privatisation of land in Mexico. This is explored in more depth in chapter three.

Salinas' comprehensive liberalisation of the agricultural sector in 1992 was planned with the intention of entering into The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. In order to do so, the role of the state in the rural sector had to be altered drastically. For Mexico, NAFTA implied a process of modernisation in which competitive exports crops such as winter vegetables and fruits would replace less profitable basic grains. A 15 year gradual phase out of grain tariffs was negotiated in order to ease the competitive pressures on Mexico's grain producers (Rodarte, 2003: 131-134). However, just three years after NAFTA was implemented the Mexican government, citing supply shortages of basic grains, unilaterally approved imports from the US above the agreement's quotas. Corn prices fell by nearly 50 percent at the same time as the government ended its price support system and other rural extension programmes (Wise, 2003). Figure three shows the amount of maize and wheat, two of the country's most important basic staples, Mexico imported between 1980 and 2011 (The vast majority from the USA).

Figure 3. Total volume of corn and wheat imported by Mexico 1985-2010 (metric tonnes).

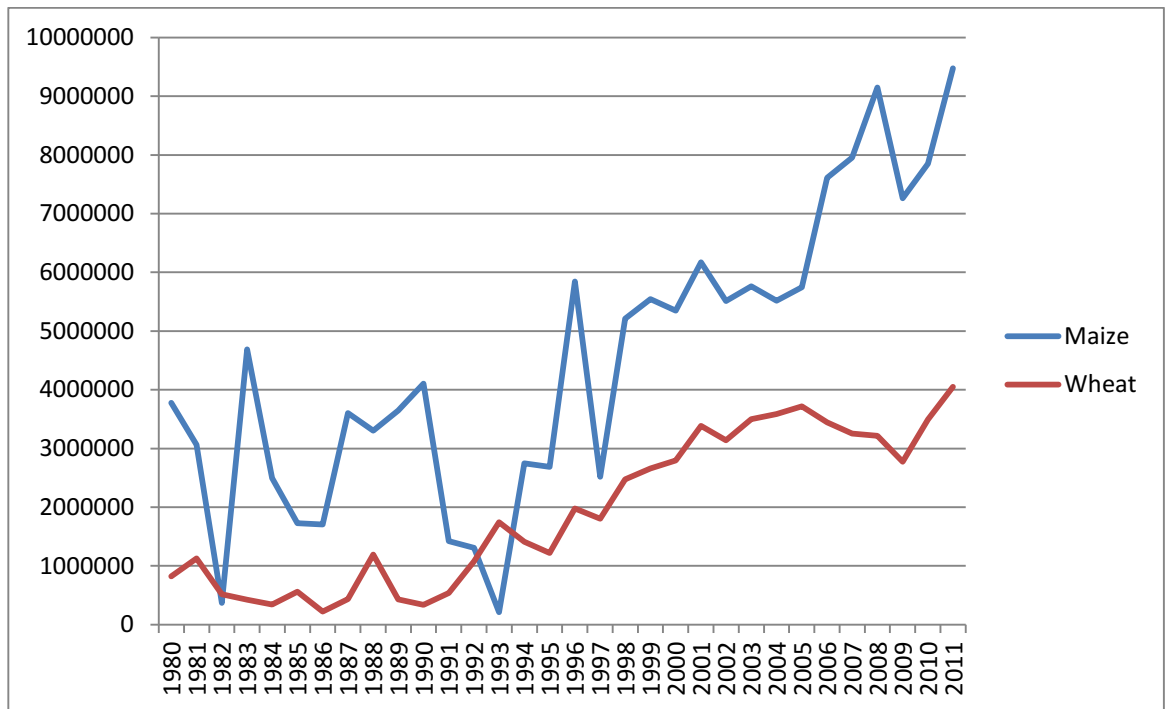


(Source: FAOSTAT, 2014 - my elaboration)

For the nine years before NAFTA came into effect in 1994, Mexico was importing between 0.5 and just under 5 million metric tonnes of corn annually, with import dependence fluctuating violently depending on national supply conditions year on year. From 1994 to 2011 both corn and wheat imports increased significantly relative to the years prior to NAFTA's implementation. Mexico's dependence on the importation of both products has

more than tripled from the 1980s to the late-2000s. A similar trend is displayed by Ecuador's imports of the same two products, both major staples there also.

Figure 4. Total volume of corn and wheat imported by Ecuador 1985-2010 (metric tonnes).



(Source: FAOSTAT, 2014 - my elaboration)

Like Mexico, Ecuador demonstrates a similar trend of a marked, steadily increasing dependence on imports of staple foodstuffs from the mid-1990s following the implementation of neoliberal policies that saw the state withdraw from productive support for the peasant sector while the national market was simultaneously opened up to foreign imports. Between 1980 and 1995 maize imports were highly variable but only rose over four million tonnes in two of these 15 years. By 1998 over five million tonnes were imported annually and from that point onwards imports increased rapidly, reaching over nine million tonnes in 2008. From the mid-1990s onwards wheat imports have more than tripled. Up until the early 1980s both countries' agricultural sectors were relatively protected from cheap imports of basic grains behind high tariff walls that were flexibly raised and lowered in response to internal demand. In years when national demand outstripped national supply, tariffs were lowered to accept imports and keep down food prices. However, from the early 1980s, especially following the implementation of IMF SAPs in 1982 (Mexico) and 1983 (Ecuador), tariff barriers were significantly reduced or

eliminated leading to the flooding in of cheaper (subsidised) grains from Northern producers.

Salinas' rush to liberalise in order to meet the NAFTA deadline meant that the government did not implement measures for a phased transition to neoliberalisation of the countryside. The lack of articulation between the reforms and the institutional vacuum left by state withdrawal threw smallholders dedicated to production of staples for national consumption into new market and production contexts that they were poorly prepared to enter (Mhyre, 1998: 39). In 1990, BANRURAL's budget was severely cut as the bank reoriented towards farmers who had access to high quality lands dedicated primarily to production of export products. The bank's total financed area reduced from 7.2 million to 1.2 million hectares between 1988 and 1991, mainly withdrawing credit from maize production and focusing in on the production of non-traditional exports (Ibid: 52).

The food sovereignty movement emerged on the world stage in the 1990s in the context of an intensifying global agrarian crisis exacerbated by trade liberalisation and SAPs that saw national states withdrawing from domestic agricultural sectors across the global South. Its struggles and discourses were built in opposition to the consolidating corporate food regime and demanded the democratisation of national food and agricultural policies and the end of food dependency and depeasantisation wrought by neoliberalism (McMichael, 2014: 934). The movement contests the increasing capitalisation of world agriculture and unprecedented market power and profits of monopoly food corporations (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011: 111) that has resulted in a form of production that responds to foreign market demands while local/national production for local/national consumption is neglected (Teubal, 2009: 14). The threat posed by neoliberalism to rural livelihoods led diverse regional and national peasant organisations around the world to form their own transnational movement, the Via Campesina, in 1993. The internationalisation of the peasant movement was seen by many peasant leaders as a necessary response to the increasing internationalisation of capital which could no longer be contested effectively solely within nation states (Borras, 2004: 4). During the 1990s, food sovereignty emerged as a discourse in Mexico and Ecuador and developed to become the main organising principle of national peasant movements in both countries, CIOAC and FENOCIN included.

Mexico's food sovereignty movement, influenced ideologically by the VC's establishment, emerged specifically in the context of NAFTA and the impacts of trade liberalisation on the ejidal sector. The country's national peasant movement was in crisis following Salinas'

reform of state-peasant movement relations (analysed in detail in chapter four), the reform of Article 27, and Mexico's entry into NAFTA in 1994. These experiences were fundamental in shaping interpretations of, and demands for, food sovereignty. Luis Meneses, an influential national peasant leader at the time and a central protagonist in bringing the VC's second international congress to Mexico in 1996, highlights how his organisation's historical struggles articulated with the implementation of NAFTA to shape not only the Mexican peasant movement's emerging calls for food sovereignty, but also those of the VC itself.

'For us as UNORCA (Unión Nacional de Organizaciones Regionales Campesinas Autónomas) it seemed that there was a total distancing of the state from agrarian activities, an abandonment. We said that we had to discuss (NAFTA) with the campesinos and that the state should not approve the agrarian chapter of the agreement, but the government paid us no attention... so we put forward a theme that the VC began to embrace, that it still embraces, which is the issue of the defence of food sovereignty....In the context of NAFTA it became a unifying banner for us and other organisations. We proposed that to defend food sovereignty meant that the government could not abandon the countryside. It meant organising a national system of production - with campesinos. It meant defending the small producer. It meant that we and the campesinos themselves form our own instruments to confront the market, to feed Mexico'. **Luis Meneses, founder and ex-national president of UNORCA (21 February 2013, Mexico City).**

Leticia López Zepeda, national coordinator for ANEC (*National Association of Commercialising Enterprises / Asociación Nacional de Empresas Comercializadoras*), locates the historical origins of the Mexican peasant movement's conceptions of food sovereignty in the rural policies of the ISI period.

'Previously Mexico had a closed economy so fundamentally the concept of food sovereignty is based on this experience, in us producing what we consume...However, it's not just a question of production but also of who produces and for what... Peasants, on their land, to feed themselves and the general population, that includes also the issue of our natural resources. It has a social, environmental and cultural content - for example a lot of money has been invested in Sinaloa and other states on the north to produce high yields with agrochemicals, fertilisers, but this isn't the concept of sovereignty'. **Leticia López Zepeda, national coordinator for ANEC (8 February 2013, Mexico City).**

For CIOAC, as well as Mexico's other VC member organisations, the notion of food sovereignty remains strongly related to, even constructed on the basis of, a contestation of NAFTA. One of the organisation's guiding principles is stated as 'defence of food sovereignty', understood as 'the constitutional right of the nation to produce its own food'. CIOAC also states that 'food sovereignty should be the principle axis of public policies towards the countryside, sustained in state policy'. To do so, they argue, requires first and

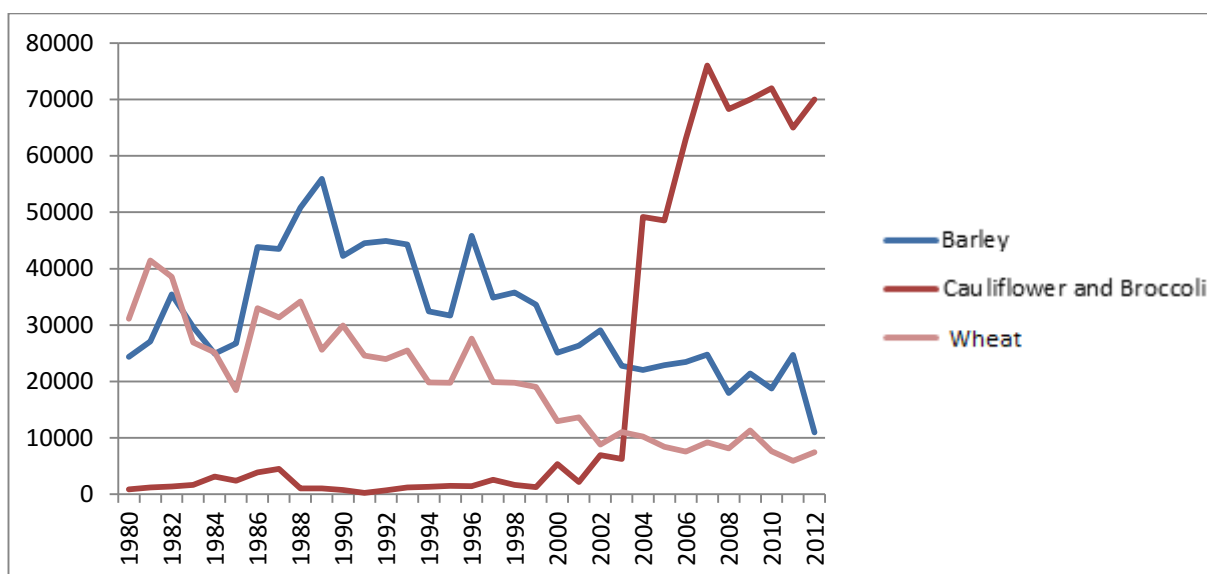
foremost the revision of NAFTA as the basis upon which a new agrarian programme can be developed 'which places at its centre the interests and aspirations of the population, especially the men and women of the countryside' (CIOAC, 2010).

Neoliberal restructuring in Latin America led states to focus on (or create) 'comparative advantage' in agriculture, diversify export production and further integrate into the world market. Since the 1980s, Ecuador's (neoliberal) development model has been built on the export of oil and agro-industrial and primary products. The crisis of the peasant economy that began immediately following the elimination of the *huasipungo* has intensified ever since, especially from the onset of neoliberalism. It has forced many of the urban, but particularly rural poor, to migrate abroad in search of employment and survival. Smallholder peasants in particular have had to diversify their reproduction strategies away from purely or even predominantly landed production in order to retain their access to land. In 1994, the ability of peasants to petition for land was dealt a major blow as a new law was passed that formally ended the state's role in agrarian reform. Ecuador's 1994 '*Ley de Desarrollo Agrario*' (Agrarian Development Law) aimed to fully subject land to capital through the creation of a liberalised land market. Like Mexico's 1992 agrarian reform law and its amendment of Article 27 of the constitution, the overriding aim on the Agrarian Development Law was to facilitate capital accumulation in the countryside through the removal of the remaining legal, social and institutional obstacles to a fully liberalised rural sector. In terms of land tenure, land titling programmes have been carried out since the 1990s in an attempt to formally legalise peasant holdings as individual private property and thus fully subject land to capital. One of these, PRODEPINE (Development Project for Ecuador's Indigenous and Black Peoples / *Proyecto de Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas y Negros del Ecuador*), a World Bank funded development project targeted at the country's poorest indigenous and black communities, legalised over 250,000 hectares between 1999 and 2003 (Cabrera, 2004). However, many of Ecuador's most marginalised rural producers have rejected these schemes (according the latest census data from 2002, 992,000 landowners are without formal property titles). Legalising their land holdings may allow peasants to have access to much needed credit but simultaneously comes with the possibility of indebtedness and dispossession (Laforge, 2010). Even without formal titles it is possible to buy and sell land through informal exchanges in Ecuador. With or without formalised property rights 94.5 percent of Ecuador's total agricultural land is held as de facto private property (SIPAE, 2011; 9) making exposure to market forces and associated forces of dispossession far greater than for Mexican producers that access land under the

ejidal, or social property system (see chapter three for a more in depth analysis of the implications of these distinct property regimes for peasant production and reproduction strategies and processes of class differentiation).

Across Latin America, market liberalisation and state withdrawal has reduced the role of all but the most entrepreneurial/capitalised peasant classes in national food production and increased national dependence on food imports. In Ecuador, the diversification of export production under neoliberalism and the search for 'comparative advantage' is typified by the cut flower industry. By 2000, flowers had come to represent 61.9 percent of the total value of non-traditional export products - up from a value of \$19.2M to \$194.6M in the period 1991-2000 (FAOSTAT, 2014). Other export crops, both traditional (banana) and non-traditional (palm oil), saw massive increases in their production as a direct result of market liberalisation and renewed foreign capital investment in Ecuador's rural sector, produced as they are highly capitalised mono-crop plantations. According to FAOSTAT (2014), Ecuador's annual production volume of bananas more than doubled from 3,054,566 tonnes in 1990 to 7,931,060 tonnes in 2010, while palm oil annual production rose from 150,424 to 400,000 tonnes over the same period. However, Ecuador's export boom has been limited to crops produced on large-scale, highly capitalised production units. Figure five shows how the production of barley and wheat, important staple crops typically grown by Andean peasant households, has declined significantly over the neoliberal era while the production of non-traditional cauliflower and broccoli has increased dramatically. The latter are overwhelmingly produced on capital and input intensive production units due to the high initial costs of planting and the export quality standards that producers have to meet. Under-capitalised Andean smallholders with little or no access to credit find it extremely difficult to enter these niche markets. At the same time the entry of subsidised basic grains from northern producers following market liberalisation has left them increasingly unable to compete, in what were their traditional markets, against cheaper imports of staples such as barley and wheat.

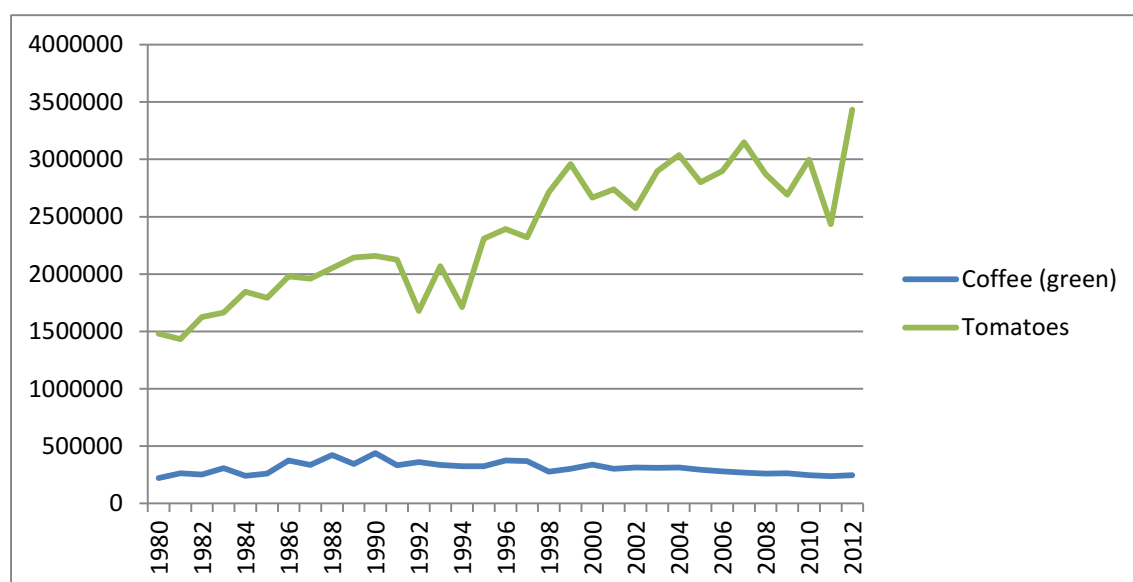
Figure 5. Total annual production volume (metric tonnes) of barley, wheat and cauliflower/broccoli in Ecuador (1980-2012).



(Source: FAOSTAT, 2014 - my elaboration)

In Mexico the contrast between coffee and tomato production similarly highlights how production in the peasant sector has stagnated over the neoliberal era while that of the private sector, variously supported and subsidised by the state, has increased.

Figure 6. Annual production volume (metric tonnes) of coffee and tomatoes in Mexico, 1980-2012.



(Source: FAOSTAT, 2014 - my elaboration)

As shown in figure six, the production of tomatoes has increased steadily over the preceding two decades, especially after the implementation of NAFTA and associated market liberalisation policies in 1994. Mexico's tomato production is concentrated in the northern border states, Sinaloa in particular, on large, (state) irrigated private holdings destined predominantly for export markets. Coffee, on the other hand, is another important export crop but produced overwhelmingly by the social/peasant sector. Its production has stagnated over the past 20 years as formerly state provided and subsidised credits and technical assistance for the peasantry have been slashed or eliminated. The termination of land reform signified the end of the possibility of extending the social sector geographically. In addition, the intensification of production is not an option for the vast majority of coffee producers concentrated in southern Mexico who are unable to access the resources required, credit in particular, to improve production.

Despite thirty years of agrarian reform, Ecuador's agrarian structure is still characterised by extreme concentration of land, power and wealth and by an impoverished peasant sector occupying small, fragmented (and fragmenting) holdings and increasingly dependent on off-farm sources of income for survival. The greatest achievement of the reform process - the elimination of precarious, indentured forms of labour exploitation - was also its greatest weakness. It created an 'independent' peasantry with access to minimal and marginal plots with little state support for production, and exposed from the outset to forces of dispossession that would only increase with the extension and deepening capitalist social relations as Ecuador underwent neoliberal restructuring. Structural inequality of land access continues to this day and is confirmed by Ecuador's most recent agricultural census data (2000), shown in table two and compared with data from the two previous censuses in 1954 and 1974.

Table 5. Structure of land tenancy in Ecuador.

Number of Properties						
Area of holding	1954 Census	1974 Census	2000 Census	1954 Census (percent)	1974 Census (percent)	2000 Census (percent)
Under 5 ha	251,686	346,877	535,309	71.1	66.8	63.5
From 5 to 20 ha	67,650	96,360	176,726	19.1	18.6	21.0
From 20 to 100 ha	27,742	64,813	111,290	7.8	12.5	13.2
More than 100 ha	7,156	11,091	19,557	2.0	2.1	2.3
Total	354,234	519,141	842,882	100	100	100
Hectares						
Area of holding	1954 Census	1974 Census	2000 Census	1954 Census (percent)	1974 Census (percent)	2000 Census (percent)
Under 5 ha	432,200	538,700	774,225	7.2	6.8	6.3
From 5 to 20 ha	565,800	935,300	1,706,794	9.4	11.8	13.8
From 20 to 100 ha	1,138,700	2,664,700	4,614,436	19.0	33.5	37.3
More than 100 ha	3,863,000	3,810,800	5,260,375	64.4	47.9	42.6
Total	5,999,700	7,949,500	12,355,830	100	100	100

(Created by Ruiz P. in: Zapata, Ruiz & Brassel, 2008: 21. Source: Ecuador's national agricultural census data)

Table four demonstrates how both the total number of production units, and the number measuring less than five hectares, more than doubled between 1954 and 2000 despite the massive increase in colonisation of the Amazon region shown in figure two. It also shows that, in the 2000 census, 63.5 percent of all units measured less than five hectares, but occupied just 6.3 percent of the total land area under production. On the other hand, while production units measuring 100 hectares and above represent just 2.3 percent of all units, they concentrate a massive 42.6 percent of the agricultural land. Despite the country's two agrarian reform laws, the gini coefficient for land had fallen by just 0.06 from the pre-

reform period (0.86) to the year 2000 (0.80), with inequality of land access remaining extremely high.

In Mexico, where land reform was much more radical in terms of its (re)distributional impacts than in Ecuador, CIOAC and other national level VC organisations are united in their belief that the land reform era is now over and that further redistribution is neither possible (no land left to (re)distribute) nor desirable. Their struggles for food sovereignty are centred on demanding state support for the social sector - ejidos and communities - with demands for peasant production to form the basis of Mexico's agricultural system and the provision of national food supply. This contrasts with most of the VC organisations in Ecuador where the continuing massive inequality of land distribution remains the fundamental point of contention for FENOCIN and other VC member organisations in the country and their struggles for, and conceptions of, food sovereignty. For these organisations, food sovereignty cannot exist without first enacting a radical redistribution of land to the peasantry, backed up by ongoing state support for sustainable peasant production, as the basis of local, regional and national food production systems.

'If a government does not carry out an agrarian reform, an agrarian revolution, nothing is going to change. It (the land) is the source of a country's wealth, but until now (agrarian reform) hasn't affected the big landowners...If there is not expropriation, there is no agrarian revolution. And there is no expropriation if there is no confiscation.' **José Aguasaca, National President of the FEI (Ecuador Indian Federation / Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios) (10 April 2013, Quito).**

For FENOCIN in particular, food sovereignty will never be possible in Ecuador without an 'agrarian revolution' that democratises land access as the starting point for the subsequent strengthening of peasant agriculture as the basis of local, regional and national food production systems (FENOCIN, 2014). In contrast to Ecuador's 'from above' history of agrarian change, Mexico's land reform transformed the class structure of the countryside, shattering the basis of landed production formerly controlled by a powerful pre-capitalist landlord class. Mexico may not represent a textbook case of 'from-below' transition, heavily mediated or even controlled as it was by the Mexican state. However, it was still responsible for the effective elimination of a pre-capitalist landlord class and, owing to the political power of the peasantry, the institution of the country's unique system of social property. Despite the very different histories of agrarian reform and the changing agrarian structures of both countries, on-going neoliberalisation has meant that all but the most capitalised peasants in Mexico and Ecuador confront increasingly difficult yet similar

challenges to their survival on the land. State withdrawal of productive support for the peasant sector, the process of creating a fully capitalist land market, unrestricted imports of staple foodstuffs from subsidised northern producers and falling and increasingly volatile prices for peasant produced products are all phenomena that both country's peasantries have faced over the past 30 years, albeit to different extents both between and within the two countries geographically and in terms of social class. It is within this context; the immiseration, dispossession and (semi-) proletarianisation of all but the most capitalised, entrepreneurial peasant classes under the neoliberal or 'corporate' food regime (McMichael, 2007) that food sovereignty has emerged to become an emblematic banner of struggle for national peasant movements in Mexico, Ecuador, and across Latina America. Deeper analysis of these movements, their diverse (and contested) interpretations of its meaning, and the various political strategies which guide them, will all be dealt with in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 2. A Class Based Analysis of Food Sovereignty

2.1 Class and the Food Sovereignty Movement

The Via Campesina's (VC) central goal of 'food sovereignty' is presented by the movement and its agrarianist proponents as a viable and necessary alternative to the neoliberal or 'corporate' food regime (McMichael, 2006) which is dispossessing the peasantry on mass, causing food crises and wreaking environmental destruction on a world scale. According to Araghi (2009: 134 & 135) the agrarian programme in the era of neoliberal globalisation has intensified both depeasantisation and deproletarianisation via displacement across the world and represents a historically specific form of the food regime of capital. It is a continuation of the global division of labour at the expense of home markets, national divisions of labour and national food security. The food sovereignty movement struggles against this programme and for its replacement with 'sustainable' food systems based on small-scale peasant production. As a result of what Araghi terms 'the enclosure food regime', agriculture's direct producers become redundant on a daily basis and are thrown out of national divisions of labour into a globalisation vortex as masses of surplus labour in motion (Ibid: 135). Davis (2004: 10) argues that neoliberal policies of agricultural deregulation have accelerated the exodus of surplus rural labour to urban slums even as job creation has generally fallen in urban centres. By the end of the 1980s the vast majority of the poor in Latin America (115 million in 1990) were living in urban slums or colonies rather than in farms or villages (80 million) (Ibid: 20). Rural dispossession has fuelled the unprecedented growth of the informal working class (Ibid: 24) and in 2009 the percentage of the working populations of Mexico and Ecuador employed in the non-agricultural informal sector stood at 53.7 and 60.9 percent respectively (ILO, 2012). The growing urban informal sector, composed mainly of expropriated and semi-proletarianised peasants, is an indication of an increasingly exclusionary system as evidenced by growing levels of temporary work, labour expulsion from manufacturing, stagnant or falling real wages for most, rising wage inequality and higher rates of unemployment (Jonakin, 2006: 292).

However, far from disappearing as a result of processes of capitalist development, proponents of food sovereignty argue that peasants are reproducing themselves as a social force capable of bringing about systemic change with 'food sovereignty' based on sustainable peasant and 'small scale farmer' production at its core (Desmarais, 2007: 37; McMichael, 2008; Rosset, 2011). This chapter will examine the importance class dynamics

that have shaped, and continue to shape, peasant organisations and the nature of their demands. It will show that FSM claims and assumptions of a unified 'movement of movements' (Araghi, 2009: 138) in which all classes of 'the peasantry' are united against the neoliberal food regime is difficult to sustain given the diverse - often contradictory - class characteristics and class based interests within and between peasant organisations of the VC. The chapter will examine how class dynamics within CIOAC and FENOCIN condition how they interact with other national level organisations with similar and differing class compositions. It will show that their interpretations of, and demands for food sovereignty are significantly influenced by the historical development of their organisations' mass bases in their national contexts and the relationships with their national states and governments.

The VC consists of a diverse range of organisations, each with their own constellations of class composition, political affiliations and ideological currents. All VC organisations subscribe to the central goal of food sovereignty, but how they interpret this, and the actions they take to try to achieve it, correlate with these and many other case specific factors. Analyses of the internal workings of VC national level peasant organisations are almost entirely absent from a literature which tends to assume rather than interrogate unity. Borras (2008: 277) criticizes this analytical neglect, emphasising the need to engage with class differences both within and between national peasant movements rather than ignoring or dismissing their significance. This is an important step towards finding ways to ensure truly inclusive and effective representation of the highly diverse and heterogeneous classes and groups of the rural poor. In a 2010 article examining the VC's Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform he shows how the Philippines' three VC affiliated member organisations, each sharing very similar mass bases composed of poor peasants and landless rural labourers, are divided by ideology rather than class (Ibid: 2010: 783-784). As Borras argues, this highlights the importance of ideological and political differences as significant points of conflict and collaboration among national level peasant organisations, as we will see in the cases of Mexico and Ecuador in chapter four. Edelman's (2008: 235) study of Central American regional peasant organising is a similar exception to the general lack of class analysis and examination of internal movement dynamics in the contemporary food sovereignty/peasant movement literature. His article shows how ASOCODE (*Asociación de Organizaciones Campesinas de Centroamérica para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo*), a regional Central American peasant association, divided in the late 1990s as a consequence of ideological and class differences. These came to a head in the context of inter-organisational competition for expanding donor funding and deepening rural

economic crisis as markets for peasant goods became increasingly unviable and mass out migration from the countryside reduced the political weight of member organisations. According to Edelman, the diversity of constituent organisations and their social bases - agricultural workers, indigenous groups, independent peasants, cooperative members - once seen as a strength, became a source of polarisation and division as the rural crisis deepened (Ibid: 239). In this chapter I hope to complement these analyses with evidence from the Ecuadorian and Mexican peasant movements. However, I will embed the class analysis of contemporary VC organisations in their historical contexts to show that the class bases of national peasant movements are not static, but highly dynamic, as evidenced by the changing class bases of these organisations from the developmentalist period into the era of neoliberal globalisation. This dynamism has been, and remains, central to intra-movement processes of conflict and collaboration as well as the nature and forms of expression of peasant movement demands.

The failure to interrogate class differences among and within peasant movements and the neglect of inter- and intra-movement dynamics disguises important internal tensions within and between VC organisations nationally as to what food sovereignty actually means as a focus of organisational struggle. It also represents a major gap in the food sovereignty literature. With the balance of forces between the FSM and corporate agricultural interests certain to determine to a large extent the possibilities for reform or transformation of the neoliberal food regime (Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011: 117), analysis of the internal dynamics of individual peasant organisations is essential for examining the extent and causes of unity and disunity within the peasant movement itself. Without such investigation, as is the case at present, unity is typically assumed rather than analysed. This may result in the transformational potential of the food sovereignty movement being overstated and the legitimacy of its claims to represent all 'people of the land' exaggerated. By analysing the issue we may be able to suggest ways to better achieve the 'unity in diversity' the VC strives for without necessarily assuming its existence in the first place. We may also be able to better incorporate marginalised rural classes and groups currently under represented or not represented at all by the VC and its organisations at present. For clarification 'marginality' is, throughout this chapter, referred to on the basis of the productive system. It is conceptualised on the basis of Kay's (2006: 459) definition to mean un-, under-, or insecure employment, and/or a lack of assets (land, inputs etc.) and credit that generate vulnerability to production and reproduction crises.

Despite the assumption of food sovereignty as a unifying project for a seemingly homogenous 'people of the land', or at least one that unites all classes of the peasantry against the 'corporate food regime' (McMichael, 2006), this chapter will argue that VC organisations define and struggle for food sovereignty based to a great extent on the social class of their mass bases. It will be argued food sovereignty is itself a class project representing principally peasant producers of staple crops that produce both for the market and their own subsistence, as well as depending to varying degrees on wage labour to meet household reproduction requirements. In the cases of Mexico and Ecuador, the food sovereignty movement tacitly excludes three major peasant classes which will be examined in more detail in the following pages; a) rural labour; b) landless/land poor peasants heavily dependent on off-farm sources of income; and c) small peasant producers dependent on export crop production as a central component of their production and reproduction strategies. 'Small' peasant producers is here taken to mean peasant households that are net sellers of labour power. The lack of representation of these classes within the food sovereignty movement questions claims by the VC and its advocates that food sovereignty is a unifying project for all 'people of the land'. Moreover, it will be argued that the movement favours the interests of small staple producing peasants to the exclusion of the interests of the three other classes mentioned. This generates a tendency toward tension rather than unity within national peasant movements. In order to examine the class dynamics of the food sovereignty movement this chapter will examine the internal dynamics within and between national level VC organisations in Mexico and Ecuador. It will do so by focusing on one national level organisation in each country (CIOAC in Mexico and FENOCIN in Ecuador), the historical development of their class compositions and struggles, and how this has influenced their interpretations of, and struggles for, food sovereignty. It will then examine how each engages with other VC organisations at the national level and how the differing class bases of national level VC organisations shape their relationships.

2.2 Interpreting 'Class' in the Food Sovereignty Movement

Edelman (2013) argues that the FSM has not translated the term 'food sovereignty' into concrete policy proposals or dealt with issues such as regulatory apparatus necessary to manage such questions as farm size, product and technical mixes, trade etc. This argument not only fails to recognise the real, concrete achievements made by the food sovereignty movement in terms of broad aspects of government rural policy - at least in the cases of Mexico and Ecuador, as we will see in the following chapters - but it also over-simplifies the multi-faceted nature of the term and how it is strategically employed by peasant organisations that compose the movement. For Mexican and Ecuadorian peasant organisations 'food sovereignty' is not only a struggle for a set of policies that favour peasant production, the peasant economy, and socio-cultural practices of diverse peasant groups. It is also a unifying banner that articulates an ideological response to the exclusionary, impoverishing and proletarianising neoliberal food regime. It is at once an attempt to unify diverse peasant groups and classes which, although occupying different class 'positions' in local, regional and national class structures (i.e. various degrees of integration into/dependence on off-farm wage labour, subsistence production, cash-crop markets etc.) nonetheless share a common enemy in neoliberalism and the rural policies that it shapes. In analysing the class base of the food sovereignty movement it is therefore essential to understand the multifaceted nature of class, how it is experienced, and how it is constructed by the food sovereignty movement and the organisations on which it is built.

Processes of class differentiation among the peasantry are central in shaping the struggles of contemporary agrarian movements in Latin America. Studies that focus on these processes (Bernstein, 2001 & 2006; Brass, 2002; Lerche, 2010; Byres, 1995) as the fundamental dynamic of rural capitalist development either overtly or tacitly define class in terms of 'positions' within the social relations of production. These 'positions', are, in turn, derived from relations of exploitation that arise from different forms of asset inequality. From these positions in a given structure of social relations it is assumed that a matrix of exploitation based interests is generated specific to each location (Wright, 1990). Important as these analyses are for understanding differentiation and modes of exploitation, they are limited in their power to explain contemporary peasant struggles as they ignore the central issues of political class formation, class consciousness, and the role of ideology in shaping class and resistance to actually experienced modes of exploitation. Ethnicity and gender are two particularly important factors in Mexico and Ecuador that shape how class is

experienced, its formation and class consciousness. The banner of 'food sovereignty' and its locally, regionally, and nationally specific interpretations by the organised peasantry has a unifying, symbolic value that constitutes an important political tool in the struggles of diverse peasant classes with the agents of the 'corporate food regime', namely national states and governments at all levels. It constitutes a guiding set of mobilising principles that shape organisational discourse internally and in negotiations with various levels of government and state institutions. The discourse of food sovereignty may also bridge the gap between certain structural positions within exploited classes. As Otero (2004a: 41) argues, the trajectories of class differentiation cannot be inferred from class positions, but are also heavily shaped by how people come together and organise to interpret their situation, construct their demands, defend and promote their interests, and establish alliances with other organisations in ways that contest and resist proletarianisation and dispossession. A political understanding of class can transcend the seemingly inevitable trajectory of differentiation if class is understood purely on the basis of relations of production, without incorporating political and ideological elements.

Official interpretations of 'food sovereignty' within individual organisations in Mexico and Ecuador, and the policy proposals that they shape, are heavily influenced by past histories of organisational struggles for agrarian reform and in this both countries' peasant organisations have a rich history. As we saw in chapter one, both CIOAC in Mexico and FENOCIN in Ecuador have historically been part of important movements that have shaped the form and content of past agrarian reforms and have themselves been reconstituted by these processes. These historical experiences shape the organisations' contemporary calls for food sovereignty both as concrete demands and proposals for pressing rural issues and also their more utopian, less clearly defined conceptions of a food sovereign society. Such interpretations and demands are based on the historical development and shifting internal constellations of class and political and ideological currents. Experiences with past agrarian reforms in particular have changed the class composition of both organisations' mass base; many that were once landless became landed as a result of their own struggles while, for the most part, those that remained landless often found themselves no longer represented by their organisations. This shift was accompanied by new demands and struggles based on both different structural conditions between the landed and the landless peasantry and how new forms of exploitation were experienced, interpreted, and contested by land beneficiaries and their organisations. With this change in internal class composition came a significant political change, aided by a more advantageous political opportunity structure as

a result of neoliberal restructuring and 'democratisation' from the 1980s. Both organisations moved from a focus on more militant tactics such as land invasions and anti-state rhetoric in the context of forceful state repression to a relationship with the state and government defined by these organisations as a kind of 'critical engagement' - proposal first with recourse to (generally peaceful) mass mobilisation if deemed necessary - which have since run the risk of morphing into new forms of state corporatism and a loss of organisational autonomy (see chapter four for an in depth analysis of the changing relationship between national state and governments and the organised peasantry). However, the diverse and often conflicting class, political and ideological currents within CIOAC and FENOCIN create tensions as to how to manage this difficult balance of protest and proposal. These currents flow through national territories with regionally diverse histories of capitalist development, organisational presence, agrarian reform experiences, indigenous populations and state formation, all of which shape interpretations of 'food sovereignty', the specific constellations of grassroots organisations, and their ideologies of resistance. The following section will examine the shifting class bases of FENOCIN and CIOAC as the basis for current struggles for food sovereignty.

2.3 Class Origins and Shifting Class Bases of CIOAC and FENOCIN

By examining how the class characteristics of peasant organisations have changed throughout their histories we can better understand the class-based nature of their specific interpretations of food sovereignty today. Rather than a unified 'people of the land' struggling against the neoliberal food regime we see that this very regime is present and experienced in very different ways both geographically and depending on peasant class. The peasantry is not the homogenous entity assumed by much of the food sovereignty literature, but instead consists of various classes and class fractions, from landless rural labourers to small and medium sized producers who occupy shifting semi-proletarianised positions, usually unable to reproduce themselves without engaging in some form of part-time or seasonal wage labour and variously integrated into the market through production of cash crops. The neoliberal food regime acts to differentiate this already class-differentiated peasantry which contests specific aspects of this regime in different ways based in large part on their class characteristics. By examining the shifting class

characteristics of CIOAC and FENOCIN's mass bases the following pages will attempt to show that organisational internal class differentiation is a significant factor in shaping VC peasant organisations' struggles for agrarian reform and food sovereignty. Internal class contradictions constantly threaten unity as a result of on-going processes of class differentiation. Both organisations have a history of internal divisions as a result of shifting class constellations, with one class' interests and proposals being favoured at the expense of others.

2.4 CIOAC's Class Origins

We saw in chapter one how the CCI (*Central Campesina Independiente*), precursor to CIOAC, emerged in 1961 as a response to widespread rural unrest based on the belief in the countryside that Cardenas' agrarian reform had been abandoned. At the beginning of the 1960s the 'agrarista' project had stagnated, land redistribution had almost come to a halt and the CNC - the PRI's corporatist peasant organisation through which state resources and political interests were channelled - was controlled by the ruling party with no intention of pushing for a restart of the agrarian reform process. For many, patience and hope of gaining land via institutional channels had become exhausted. For the first time since the 1930s, rural social movement of the 1960s, led by the CCI, began carrying out land invasions with landless peasants and rural workers (De la Fuente, 2011). With a heterogeneous class base combining rural workers, landless and landed peasants, agrarian reform was conceived of as both access to land and state support for peasants to make a viable living from it. As time passed and conditions changed from the initial fervour of the first case of peasant independent organising since the Mexican revolution, the shifting constellation of class interests within the organisation began to shift in favour of the demands of the landed in place of those of the landless.

Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, CCI-Roja continued its struggle for land in the face of state repression and, with a membership composed primarily of landless peasants and rural labourers, productive issues were not a major concern. Small and medium peasants with some form of ownership or access to land were far better served by the CNC or the CCI Blanca (the PRI reincorporated CCI group) than they would have been by CCI-Roja. Indeed, following successful land struggles many of CCI-Roja's producers lacked organisational support for production and many that had gained land through their

organisation's struggles joined or re-joined the CNC with its promises of resources to support production channelled from federal government (Lúa et al, 1988: 164).

Since its formation the CCI Roja had focused on the land redistribution aspect of agrarian reform over demands over productive issues as its mass base consisted primarily of landless peasants and rural wage workers. The growing proportion of agricultural workers in both the national rural class structure and the organisation's own membership led CCI-Roja leaders to the conclusion that the fundamental contradiction in the countryside at the time was that between capital and labour, between the rural bourgeoisie and the agricultural proletariat. As such, the priority task was agricultural unionisation in combination with the land struggle (Lúa et al, 1988: 39). On 5 November 1975, at the organisation's national congress, the CCI Roja renamed itself CIOAC in order to re-emphasise the need for labour unionising of agricultural wage workers of which they calculated to be over three million nationally (Terán, 2010: 39). At the same congress the leadership decided to create three distinct entities, each focused on a specific aspect of their struggle for agrarian reform (Consuelo et al, 1987: 213). The National Union of Agricultural Workers and the National Union of Land Claimants formally institutionalised the two main strands of the CIOAC's struggle to that date. However, the third entity, UNCAFAECSA (National Union of Agricultural and Forestry Credit, and of 'Ejidatario', 'Comunero' and Small Landowners' Agro-industries) was created in response to the needs of a newly emerging class of CIOAC militants that had gained land through the organisation's struggles but had up until this point been left to try to make a living from it without CIOAC support and, as a result, were often drawn back to the ranks of the CNC. UNCAFAECSA's specific role varied depending on the region, but fundamentally it was responsible for supporting peasant production with subsidized credits, inputs and commercialising assistance.

From the mid-1970s to the beginning of the 1990s the relative success of CIOAC's land struggles and its relative inability to retain its members as land beneficiaries combined with growing difficulties in the labour unionising aspect of its struggles. This period saw a shift in organisational focus from agrarian reform founded on the class struggle - agricultural workers taking control of large production units - to an emphasis on the production based interests of a growing class of small landholding peasants. As we saw in chapter one, this shift in organisational emphasis was heavily shaped by the national political context at the time; in 1975 and 1976, under the Echeverría administration, peasant land invasions swept the country forcing the government to respond with a significant renewed wave of land

(re)distribution. As mobilised land claimants became beneficiaries of state land concessions, their organisations' focus had to shift more towards land based issues to represent their mass bases' emerging, increasingly land-based needs. The struggle for land remained central to CIOAC but there was growing disillusionment within the organisation's leadership on the labour unionising front. Efforts to establish legally recognised unions were constantly rejected by government and labour struggles continually repressed by state forces. However, deeper internal issues based on landless workers not interested in organising around work began to emerge. Two cases in particular highlight this change in CIOAC's focus of struggle as a result of its shifting class base during this period and will be examined in more detail. They also emphasise the importance of a political understanding of class not limited to structural positions in the relations of production.

2.5 CIOAC in the Mountains of Guerrero

National CIOAC leaders first arrived in the Mountains of Guerrero in the municipality of Tlapa de Comonfort in 1976 with the aim of fostering political support for the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) of which they were also leading figures. In 1979 the organisation began integrating various dispersed and marginalised rural communities under the umbrella organisation 'El Consejo de la Montaña' (The Mountain Council) consisting of isolated communities eking out an ever more precarious subsistence existence on mountain slopes as fragile soils were being exhausted through overpopulation and deforestation. The mountains of Guerrero have, since the mid twentieth century, served as a source of cheap, seasonal labour for the agro-export zones of Northern Mexico, especially the tomato plantations of Sinaloa. With little or no state presence in the zone and its central role in the reproduction of cheap labour, CIOAC saw fertile ground for peasant and labour organising. However, through the creation and expansion of the Council, CIOAC's national and state leaders came to realise that the Mountain's small, landholding peasants which formed the base of the organisation in Guerrero were far more interested in organising around production and the provision of basic services in their region than in organising around labour issues they confronted as seasonal workers. This was in spite the fact that men, women and children could spend as much as six months of the year on northern plantations and wage-labour was the overwhelmingly dominant source of household income for the majority. Access to more land was an important demand for only a small number of the council's organisations whose members worked on fertile estates in

the valley of the municipal urban centre of Tlapa. In 1982 and 1983 these groups successfully fought for the redistribution of two estates to the benefit of 150 former workers and their families, one of 120 hectares and the other 180. The process was surprisingly relatively peaceful as it had the support of one Council leader who had become a national congressman just before the invasion took place. However, these were the only two cases of land redistribution as a result of the CIOAC's actions in the region and land demands were outweighed by demands for basic service provisions such as potable water and electricity, as well as the means to make the marginal land that the council's peasants already owned produce (personal interview with Roberto Cabrera Solis, CIOAC's leader in Guerrero, 2013). This reflected the class characteristics of the Council's base; small peasants whose rights to (relatively poor quality) communal lands had been granted in the Cardenas era, but who still lacked basic services and the capacity to make a viable living from the land itself. In summary, the class base of the Council was dominated by smallholders with a class consciousness more 'peasant' than 'worker', not interested in labour organising despite overwhelming dependence on wage labour for reproduction, with little demand for land and focused on mobilising for basic services first and foremost followed by production based issues. This highlights an important aspect of peasant class formation that more structuralist interpretations of class fail to account for. In structural terms, household income among CIOAC's peasant in the Mountains of Guerrero has long been dominated by off-farm wage labour with the household plot serving as a wage subsidy rather than a viable production unit. As such, in structural terms of class position these peasants can be categorised more as wage labourers than producers, or alternatively heavily proletarianised peasants. From this perspective the assumption that contemporary struggles for land constitute an 'agrarian question of labour' (Bernstein, 2001 & 2006), driven by growing dependence of a mass of the world's peasantry on increasingly scarce, oppressive and informal sources of wage employment would appear valid. What this conclusion fails to recognise is that struggles for land - both access to it and the ability to make a viable living from it - at least in the cases of Mexico and Ecuador, are fundamentally based on both non-economic *and* economic associations with the land and originate not so much from negative labour market experiences, but rather from long held desires to live viably from the land. This is not so much because of the increasingly difficult conditions facing them in the labour market, but because of the desire to be viable peasants living from the land they own. This is fundamentally tied to the discussion in the next chapter regarding peasant struggles for (relative) autonomy from and within the market. However,

the argument being made here is that contemporary land struggles originate primarily from the land itself, from the 'peasant fraction' of fragmented rural classes of labour, rather than the 'wage labour fraction' emphasised by Bernstein which, in purely quantitative terms, increasingly dominates the reproduction strategies of the marginalised peasantry. The extract below, taken from a conversation with one of many female heads of household left to work the family land as male members migrate seasonally to Sinaloa, demonstrates this desire to live from the land rather than depending on the relatively stable seasonal migration to Sinaloa's export tomato plantations:

'They go to Sinaloa because there's no work here...they go because of necessity.

(Me) What should CIOAC do to support the migrants?

Whatever it is, it has to be here, not there. If there was something (for them) here they wouldn't have to migrate. Better to focus here so that my husband doesn't have to go, so that there's no need for him to go. Many come back with nothing.' **Carmen Ovalle Ramírez, CIOAC member (12 January 2013, village of Copanatoyac, Tlapa, Guerrero).**

The quote above highlights another issue that the Bernstein's agrarian question of labour argument fails to explain. As McMichael (2006: 410) points out, why would labour struggle for land rather than unionising on the basis of struggling for improved working conditions if, as Bernstein (2006: 12) contends, the 'agrarian question of labour' is now 'manifested in struggles for land against "actually existing" forms of capitalist landed property'? Given the quantitative predominance of wage labour in marginalised peasant household reproduction strategies and the lack of interest of CIOAC members in organising around labour issues (examined below), any answer to this question would have to engage with the qualitative aspects of political class formation in the mountains of Guerrero and peasants' relationship with the land.

The presence of powerful caciquismo in the state of Guerrero dating from before the Mexican Revolution meant that land reform simply did not reach the Mountains of Guerrero until Cardenas' presidency. From 1934-1940 more land was redistributed than all the other post-revolutionary governments combined, but by the 1960s this process had once again stalled. More radical groups demanding further redistribution emerged in this period, most notably 'the Party of the Poor' (*El Partido de los Pobres*) headed by communist ex-teacher Lucio Cabañas who was assassinated by state forces in 1974. However, throughout the 1970s and 1980s smaller communist based groups demanding land distribution and influenced by Cabañas continued to operate. According to Roberto Cabrera

Solis, CIOAC's current leader in Guerrero and founding member of CIOAC in the mountains, these Communist inspired groups attracted many of CIOAC's landless members, frustrated with the organisation's production and basic services based demands and its lack of attention to latent, land based demands that were present but not being represented. Many subsequently left CIOAC's ranks as they found their class interests better represented by organisations struggling for radical agrarian reform based on redistribution than they did with the CIOAC's more service/production based demands.

On the issue of labour organising, CIOAC's efforts were hindered by repeated rejections by federal government which refused to grant legal recognition to the organisation's National Union of Agricultural Workers at both national and state levels. In 1979 and again in 1981 CIOAC tried to gain national union recognition from government, but on both occasions this was denied under the pretext that the Secretary of Work and Social Provision lacked the federal competence to deal with activities of an agrarian character (Terán, 2010: 39). At this time Lopez Portillo's administration (1976-1982) was enacting rural policy focused on the attempt to regain self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs through increasing the productivity of the most capitalised/entrepreneurial fraction of the peasantry. The government's rhetoric stressed the importance of improving rural incomes rather than redistributing property as his predecessor Echeverría had done (see chapter one). An integral component of this strategy was the active support of corporatised sectors of labour and the peasantry, certainly not the legitimisation and recognition of autonomous unions being proposed by CIOAC.

Despite Lopez-Portillo's anti-unionising policies, CIOAC managed to mobilise up to 15,000 agricultural workers from the mid- to late-1970s in the state of Sinaloa (Lúa et al, 1988: 180), many of which originated from the Mountains of Guerrero, to carry out some isolated strikes on plantations and packing facilities. But the limited effectiveness of these mobilisations, and of CIOAC's rural labour unionising more generally, was based more on internal contradictions among the organisations' members than on the impossibility of institutionalising a legal union under the prevailing national political situation. In 1992 Sinaloa and Guerrero state CIOAC branches united in an attempt to improve working conditions and wages on Sinaloan tomato plantations despite not being able to legally negotiate with or mobilise against plantation owners. Despite this limitation leaders managed to arrange meetings with some of Sinaloa's most important plantation owners who, to their surprise, were willing to meet CIOAC's core demands. One of the major

problems faced by plantation owners was - and remains - the day to day difficulty of securing the necessary labour force on their holdings; the arrival of workers' friends and relatives on nearby farms as well as constantly circulating information regarding better wages with other employers meant that plantation owners could find most of their labour force had left overnight creating massive difficulties for the harvesting of their tomatoes. As a result, they agreed to construct dignified living conditions and pay a competitive wage to CIOAC's workers if they would guarantee to stay on the same plantation for a minimum of three months. These conditions were agreed to by CIOAC's leaders, in constant dialogue with their members in the fields, and a significant achievement was hailed for CIOAC's rural labour organising efforts. However, the plan failed as workers simply broke their agreements with employers in order to return periodically to their communities in Guerrero for family events and religious and community ceremonies. This relates to far deeper issues of peasant class consciousness that will be discussed later on, but for the moment it is important to note that from the failure of this initiative onwards, CIOAC in Sinaloa and Guerrero have ceased to work on any issues regarding agricultural labour. Instead, focus shifted even more towards production issues through UCAFAECSA and demands for basic social services from the state.

The formal end to land redistribution in 1994 with Salinas' reform of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution terminated the state's obligation to redistribute land, but this aspect of Salinas' more extensive neoliberal reforms was not a strong point of contention for CIOAC in Guerrero. Pressure on the land in the Mountains has not been intense since Cardenas' redistribution as seasonal and more permanent national and international migration has acted as a social and political pressure valve in the region. Instead CIOAC has successfully fought for basic services such as clean water, electricity, housing and access to healthcare. Its struggles for productive issues have continued to grow since the 1990s in particular as more basic needs have been met and now the priority is to make the land produce. Seasonal migration to Sinaloan plantations remains the major source of family income but is no longer an issue taken up by CIOAC; rural labour is simply not represented by the organisation.

2.6 CIOAC in Chiapas

CIOAC began operating in Chiapas at the end of the 1970s at a time when the national leadership was convinced that agrarian reform must be based on rural labourers' struggles against agricultural capital. They saw Chiapas as a key location for the development of this struggle. The south-eastern state was characterised by very different agrarian property relations than those found in the Mountains of Guerrero where CIOAC established itself by bringing together dispersed communities with already formalised communal rights to land that had been established in the Cardenas administration. The Mexican revolution had arrived in Chiapas with Carranza's forces in 1914 which attempted to impose a law abolishing debt servitude. Thousands of indentured native workers were freed from ranches in central and western Chiapas yet no real land redistribution took place and most of the state's landowners were left unaffected. The Carrancistas were eventually defeated by landowners, yet ideas of the revolution and a growing agrarianist discourse began to take hold. This led to peasants making more demands on landowners for the application of newly introduced labour laws. These demands were given further impetus by Cardenas' agrarian reform programme from 1934 which for the first time since the revolution attempted to enact significant land redistribution in the state, again primarily in northern and western Chiapas. However, the political power that the embedded, pre-capitalist landlord class retained in the state meant that actual implementation was minimal. According to Villafuerte (2002: 93), the most fortunate land claimants had to wait over three years to access a plot of marginal land, while the vast majority were forced to wait between six and 17 years as the state's landlords continually refused or delayed transfers in their negotiations with federal government. In addition, these peasant gains were attacked and often reversed in subsequent years as government policy reverted to a renewed focus on agro-export favouring large, private landowners (Collier, 2005: 28). By 1948 only 581 land reform processes had been enacted in the state since the revolution, benefitting a total of 62,201 claimants and representing 12 percent of the surface area Chiapas, overwhelmingly on marginal lands (taken from de la Peña [1951] : cited in Villafuerte, [2002: 94]).

Overall, land redistribution was successfully resisted by the vast majority of Chiapas' entrenched land owning class and it was only from the 1970s that independent rural movements were able to successfully push for more extensive land reforms. It was into this context that CIOAC arrived in Chiapas in 1977. With national CIOAC leaders convinced that

the struggles of agricultural workers were the key to socialist revolution, Chiapas was considered to have the perfect conditions for organising this struggle.

The organisation first established contact with agricultural workers on coffee estates in the municipalities of Simojovel and Huitiupan in northern Chiapas. Typical of the social relations of coffee production in the state, these workers were given marginal subsistence plots on the edge of the estates on which to live in exchange for three days of their labour for the landowner per week. CIOAC used federal labour laws as the basis of their demands for agrarian reform, arguing that landowners violated minimum wage and fair labour standards (Ibid: 77), and an already developed agrarianist discourse among the region's peasants provided CIOAC with workers keen to mobilise against estate owners. Despite not being granted permission to register an official union at the state level on two occasions in 1981 (Garcia, 2002: 156) CIOAC did manage to organise strikes on 30 coffee plantations in September, and on 26 in October that same year. Some landowners were intimidated by the strikes and negotiated debt repayments or land transfer to CIOAC members, while others increased repression with their own armed forces (Lúa et al, 1988: 182-183). This tactic of land invasions based on landowners' failure to implement labour laws was expanded as CIOAC pushed into other regions of the state throughout the 1980s, especially the south-eastern municipality of Las Margaritas. However, despite CIOAC's desire to establish cooperative production systems on coffee estates and ranches that had been taken over by their militants, peasants had other ideas. The vast majority prioritised individual rights to their own plots of land for both subsistence and cash crop production. In the case of coffee estates, the area cultivated with coffee was divided up among ex-workers into distinct plots each of which was to be the responsibility of individual ex-workers. Peasants were not against communal land for grazing or communal systems of commercialisation or accessing resources but first and foremost they wanted individual autonomy regarding the main production decisions of their households. This focus on individual rights was a surprise for CIOAC's national leadership as it went against their prevailing socialist ideals of collectivised production. However, they could not go against the interests of their members. As a result of CIOAC's successful land demands and invasions, the class base of the organisation in Chiapas gradually shifted from landless workers to smallholder peasants. This shift in class base resulted in new forms of class consciousness based on the struggle to remain on the land against proletarianising market forces and state policy geared towards managing the political consequences of the peasantry's disintegration, rather than a class consciousness built fundamentally in

opposition to a pre-capitalist landlord class as it had been during the land struggle era. This had, and continues to have, important implications for class consciousness and the role of ideology in shaping and directing peasant struggles not just for CIOAC and Mexico's national peasant movement, but also FENOCIN, Ecuador's and Latin America's peasant struggles in the era of neoliberal globalisation. As Teubal (2009: 11) asserts, in contrast to those of the 20th Century, contemporary agrarian movements are not concentrated on fighting a land owning oligarchy. The present global context has given rise to new types of transnational and globalised dominant classes and current struggles are about resisting the hegemonic industrial agricultural model promoted by transnational corporations (TNCs) and national states. Exploited and dominated as they were by a landed oligarchy as landless peasants, variously dependent on and subordinated to landlords for their survival, class consciousness was constructed on a physical entity: the landlord. This common, visible enemy acted as a unifying entity for CIOAC's (and FENOCIN's) members. Collective struggle developed on this basis to eventually overthrow landlords and/or reform pre-capitalist landed property relations. As land claimants became beneficiaries the landlord was no longer the class opposite around which class consciousness was constructed. Instead, mediated via the market rather than directly embodied in a recognisable group of people, exploitation; its sources and its forms, became more opaque and distanced - both physically and conceptually - from the site of production. Neoliberal globalisation, at the core of the food sovereignty movement's struggles, has further obscured the mechanisms of exploitation and generated an organisational crisis for contemporary peasant organisations such as CIOAC and FENOCIN in terms of fostering and disseminating 'food sovereignty' as an ideological project. As we will see in chapter four, this has significantly shaped these organisations' political and mobilisational strategies.

As the class composition of CIOAC's mass base shifted as a result of the organisation's own successful land struggles, so too did the nature of its demands. As mentioned earlier, CIOAC had experienced the problem of its land reform beneficiaries turning to the CNC once they had gained the rights to land. If this was not to occur in Chiapas and ex-workers were not willing to collectively run the estates they were formerly employed on, CIOAC had to meet the more individualistic demands of an emerging class of small, under-capitalised peasants. As in Guerrero, it mobilised against the state to demand basic service provision in newly formed ejidos and communities and, through UNCAFAECSA, attempted to provide production based support for its members. The class structure of the organisation experienced a gradual shift, as members and their local leaders went from being landless to

landed. This represented a transition away from agricultural workers and rights to land as central to the struggle for agrarian reform, to a focus on social and productive issues. Agricultural workers and landless peasants, typically one and the same thing, were increasingly under-represented by the organisation through the course of this transition from the 1980s to the early 1990s as land struggles culminated in land grants to formerly landless peasants. By the mid-1990s CIOAC at the national level had all but in name ceased to work issues related to rural labour. This reflected a dramatic shift in the class base of an organisation that had first entered Chiapas less than two decades earlier precisely with the intention of bringing about socialist transformation based on the struggles of the rural proletariat.

Salinas' reform of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution ended the state's obligation to redistribute land and this was not strongly contested by CIOAC. Its leaders claimed, as they do to this day, that the land reform era had come to its natural conclusion and was no longer the necessary basis for agrarian reform. The CIOAC leadership claimed (and continues to claim) that its mass base, dominated by marginalised, yet now landed peasants, were (and remain) satisfied with their land but demanding social infrastructure and provision first and foremost, closely followed by productive support. However, CIOAC's termination of the land struggle masked a latent and growing internal contradiction; since the early 1980s and within a national context of debt forced neoliberal structural adjustment and 'democratisation', formerly state repressed social organisations such as CIOAC were now being incorporated into electoral politics as a means of legitimating the neoliberal state. By the end of the 1980s/early 1990s some CIOAC leaders had come to occupy important political positions at local, state and even national levels. With this 'wave of democratisation' came increasing control by municipal governments over municipal budgets and those budgets were the main source of finance for the very kind of social programmes prioritised by CIOAC and its members. The issue of electoral politics is discussed in chapter four and so will not be examined in detail here. However, to briefly summarise for the sake of our examination of CIOAC's shifting class characteristics, success in electoral politics at all levels increasingly conditioned the organisation's ability to meet the social (and to a lesser extent during the 1980s and 1990s) and productive demands of its members. As a direct result of the political positions reached by local CIOAC leaders the organisation was able to provide water, electricity and roads to many of the communities formed from their earlier land struggles. However, the price of this relative success and the entry into municipal electoral politics was effectively the end of CIOAC's commitment to

land and rural labour struggles, and, in turn, its representation of landless peasants and rural labour. Budgets were still channelled from a highly centralised federal government and any actions such as land invasions or labour organising were liable to be punished with budget cuts or withdrawal, threatening CIOAC's ability to meet the core demands of its mass base now dominated by small landed peasants. However, ever since its members had received land as a result of such struggles during the preceding two decades, community populations had continued to grow, pressure on the land was increasing, and the next generation was once again struggling to make a viable living from the land. Internal ejido/community land fragmentation processes had been taking place and dependence on seasonal and more long-term, typically national migration for work, was growing. Simply put there was growing demand for land, this time from within peasant communities created following land reform rather than from estates and plantations. However, this demand was not being taken up by CIOAC's leadership.

The 1994 Zapatista uprising provided a decisive rejection of CIOAC's official position that following the reform of Article 27 land was no longer in demand and, as a result, no longer represented a necessary component CIOAC's struggles. The latent, internal class contradiction within CIOAC between landholding and landless peasants had not been resolved and the Zapatista rebellion provided the latter, and CIOAC, with an opportunity to resolve this growing tension. Zapatista inspired land invasions were mimicked by CIOAC members who invaded 86 properties with a total area of 9,046 hectares from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s. Many of the lands invaded were actually small properties, some no more than eight or nine hectares, therefore under legal levels for redistribution. In the process of carrying out the invasions and convinced by the Zapatista's calls for more radical structural change than the struggle for social and productive support from the state to peasants, many of CIOAC's members abandoned the organisation and joined the EZLN (*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*) (Villafuerte, 2002: 228). According to estimates of CIOAC leaders in the municipality of Las Margaritas, the organisation lost around 60% of its membership base in 1994/1995 to the EZLN.

'The Zapatistas pulled in a lot of people from the CIOAC. According to the EZLN we were 'gubernamentalistas' and many (of our members) left. Three years later some began returning to us because of the achievements we had made with our form of working with the government. But originally they took 60 percent of our members'. José Antonio Vázquez ('El Camarón'), State Leader of CIOAC Chiapas (19 October 2012, Las Margaritas, Chiapas).

The EZLN reignited the hopes of an emerging younger generation that they may one day have their own land despite the official end of both the land reform process and CIOAC's own land related struggles. Despite CIOAC's tacit agreement with the end of the need for land reform it took advantage of the uprising and the political opportunity that it opened up to receive land from the state in response to invasions. Despite this, the ideological commitment of the EZLN to deeper, structural changes appealed more to many of CIOAC's landless and land poor peasants who decided to shift allegiance rather than invade land in the name of CIOAC on an opportunistic basis. Once the Zapatista movement had lost momentum as a result of selective government concessions, leadership co-optation, land grants, repression and militarisation of the state of Chiapas, CIOAC returned to its discourse of the need for social and productive development without the need for further land redistribution. It remains clear that the class interests of the organisation's remaining landless and land poor peasants will not be represented unless favourable conditions once again open up for them to do so, but such conditions are unlikely to be opened up by the actions of CIOAC itself. Instead this will depend on the mobilisations of the landless and land poor themselves, outside of CIOAC. In the meantime, this growing class within the organisation will be forced to find work elsewhere, out of their communities. CIOAC in Chiapas, as in Guerrero, has ceased to represent rural workers. Nor does it represent the interests of landless or land poor peasants whose calls for further redistribution are effectively silenced by the organisation. The majority are forced to try to make a living in urban centres nationally and internationally, namely in the US, under increasingly informal and scarce employment conditions and contributing to the unprecedented growth of the informal working class.

2.7 CIOAC and Food Sovereignty

We have examined the historical development of CIOAC's class base, from broadly landless rural workers to marginalised, land-poor peasants heavily dependent on wage labour to meet household reproduction requirements. But how are the organisation's contemporary struggles for food sovereignty shaped by its class composition? Officially CIOAC subscribes to the VC's 2003 very broad definition of food sovereignty as:

'The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It develops a model of small scale sustainable production

benefiting communities and their environment. It puts the aspirations, needs and livelihoods of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations' (Via Campesina, 2003a).

Periodically the national leadership reaffirms its commitment to the principle of food sovereignty as a national level system of food supply and distribution 'producing nationally the food that we all eat, and not importing it from abroad' in the face of increasing national dependence on imported grains (Ovalle, CIOAC's national leader, 2013). Food sovereignty is an official guiding principle of the organisation and among the national level leadership it is contrasted against neoliberalism, embodied in NAFTA, with the need to protect and support the production of basic foodstuffs produced by peasants. However, beyond this very general interpretation of what food sovereignty is or should be, CIOAC has no concrete policy proposals as to how this should begin to be achieved and there is no diffusion of a food sovereignty discourse through what is a very vertically structured organisation. Why is this the case? To a great extent the food sovereignty movement embodied by the VC has, by focusing on the production of staples and ignoring the dependence of the majority of the peasantry in Latin America on export (cash) crop production and/or wage labour, marginalised these groups to favour the interests of a specific fraction of the peasantry dedicated to the production of staple crops. This represents a cross-class fraction as the VC's discourse pays no attention to class differentiation as a fundamental characteristic of the peasantry; this staples producing fraction as conceptualised by the VC, however, does not represent a homogenous grouping. In Mexico and elsewhere, peasant producers of basic foodstuffs may be net-buyers or net-sellers of labour power, market oriented/dependent, or predominantly relatively autonomous from the market/subsistence producers.

For CIOAC, the vast majority of its members in the south eastern states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero are land poor (on average 0.25-2Ha of marginal land) and depend on a combination of off-farm income and coffee production for survival. As we will see in chapter three, subsistence production and a reproduction strategy guided by the goal of retaining relative autonomy from the market predominates. They are also overwhelmingly net sellers of labour power at the household level. In the coffee growing regions of the states where research was conducted around half of CIOAC members' land is dedicated to subsistence production and the other half to coffee. Most years the subsistence plot does not provide enough to meet household requirements and must be supplemented through market purchases. There is a marked difference between how subsistence and coffee plots

are conceived that significantly shapes the nature of CIOAC members' demands. Provided that household subsistence needs are by and large met from subsistence production, demands are focused primarily on basic service provision, housing materials in particular, followed by support for improving coffee production. CIOAC's mass base in south east Mexico consists of extremely marginalised peasants, many of which remain without electricity, basic healthcare provision, dignified housing and community road access. As such, CIOAC's focus of struggle in such regions remains social rather than productive in nature. For the CIOAC leadership in these states, food sovereignty's production focus is desirable but only possible once such basic social needs have been provided for by the state. In regions and communities where such basic requirements have been met, typically as a result of CIOAC's own struggles, organisational focus has turned to 'productive development', but with a focus on export crop (coffee) production rather than on staple crops that again distances their demands from those of the food sovereignty movement and the VC. The latter has yet to articulate the potential role of peasant export crop production in a 'food sovereign' system (Edelman, 2013) and, in the case of CIOAC's coffee producers, they are doubly marginalised by the VC, firstly as export coffee producers and secondly as dependent on wage labour, an issue not addressed by the movement. Although CIOAC remains part of the VC there is growing internal criticism of what the organisation's leadership perceives as a restricted struggle for food sovereignty, limited to and benefitting organisations whose focus is predominantly based on staples production and that represent relatively better off producers, often net buyers of labour, and with a lesser degree of dependence on wage labour than CIOAC's own members. The extract below, taken from an interview with CIOAC's national secretary, highlights the organisation's critical stance towards the VC:

'(Me) Is there the possibility to discuss these kind of problems during international VC congresses?

No, because the theme of the congress tells you the issues (to be discussed) and the congress follows these issues; there's no space to discuss other things. It's not possible to discuss fundamentals. When you arrive to a meeting you can't put forward this kind of thing because the issue (being dealt with) is another...We still don't think it's pertinent for us to leave (the VC), but we think something has to change because if you ask - How has it (the VC) served us as CIOAC? Well, in truth, not much'. José Dolores López Barrios, CIOAC's national secretary (11 February 2013, Mexico City).

Before examining in more detail the issue of class (under) representation within the VC we will first examine FENOCIN's shifting class base from the land reform era to the present day.

2.8 FENOCIN on the Ecuadorian Coast and Andes

The changing class composition of FENOCIN's mass base has become a significant point of internal contention in recent years as uneven application of agrarian reform from the 1960s to the present has resulted in regionally distinct patterns of capitalist development between Ecuador's coastal plain and the Andean Sierra. These differences have been shaped by peasants' own mobilisations and demands for agrarian reform, state policy that has favoured export production on the fertile coastal plain over production of staples concentrated in the sierra, and transnational capital investment concentrated on the coast. Since the 1960s these dynamics have significantly differentiated FENOCIN's mass base in class terms between the coast and the Andes. In general, the former has benefitted far more than the latter from land redistribution carried out in the 1960s and 1970s when indentured hacienda workers became small landowners as a result of the breakup of traditional estates. In the sierra this process was less extensive as landlords were more entrenched and state and capital less concerned with the generalisation of more efficient relations of production. Population concentration in the Andes was also much higher, limiting the amount of land redistributed. The result in the sierra was a slow, uneven process of hacienda break up which created a class of still land poor peasants unable to make a viable living from the land and with reproduction strategies based primarily on wage labour in nearby urban centres and increasingly abroad. It also resulted in growing pressure on that land as the years passed and populations grew. The process of class differentiation that this uneven application produced is also inflected with ethnicity as coastal, predominantly mestizo peasants are seen to have benefitted more than highland, predominantly indigenous producers.

Regionally specific processes of class formation between the coast and the Andes have been shaped not only by the material consequences of distinct agrarian reform processes, but also significantly by ethnicity and the role that this has played historically in the country's social movements. Social class and ethnicity are not only inextricably linked (Hristov, 2009: 42), but mutually constitutive as ethnic groups have been reproduced for centuries in a subordinate interaction with other groups and classes (Bartra & Otero, 2008a: 402). Returning to Otero (2004a), economic issues are as important as cultural ones for the political constitution of class, and ethnicity has historically shaped the course of class struggle across Latin America. Economic and cultural issues have combined to shape class consciousness and diverging interpretations of what food sovereignty means and how it

should be applied between the coast and the Andes. The tensions between these very different, often contradictory interpretations, has generated significant internal conflict within FENOCIN and contributed to the organisation's internal division in 2012. To understand the roots of these differences we must first look at how FENOCIN emerged in the 1960s to force the application of Ecuador's first Agrarian Reform Law. The geographically uneven application of these reforms fostered distinct processes of class differentiation within FENOCIN and the organisation experienced growing difficulties in accommodating diverging class interests that eventually grew to the point of rupture.

2.9 FENOCIN's Diverging Class Base from the Land Reform Era

As we saw in chapter one, peasants in conflict with landowners found an ally in the new military junta which seized power in 1963. The interests of coastal peasants to own the land they worked and evict (often absentee) landlords coincided at this historical conjuncture with national and international capitalist interests that had come to dominate the Ecuadorian state as a result of the banana and sugar booms (the hold of the traditional landowning class on the state, which it had dominated before and during the cacao boom era, had been dwindling from the 1920s). Both the capitalist class and the class of coastal hacienda land renting peasants shared the desire to end pre-capitalist social relations on the coast which were seen by the former as a significant barrier to capitalist development and to the latter as the cause of their poverty and subjugation, and a parasitic obstacle to improving their conditions as producers and as communities. The 1964 Agrarian Reform Law was the first attempt by the Ecuadorian government to modernise the country's agrarian structure and put an end to pre-capitalist, traditional hacienda-minifundia relations that were hindering the development of the coastal export sector as well as proving increasingly unable to provide staples, predominantly produced in the Andes, for national consumption. Peasant resistance from below combined with national and international foreign capitalist interests within the state to attempt to accelerate the decomposition of forms of semi-feudal social relations and trigger the 1973 agrarian reform law. This second law aimed to eliminate remaining obstacles to accumulation on the coast while also accelerating the provision of inefficiently operating hacienda land to tenants under precarious tenancy arrangements to help contain a potentially revolutionary peasantry (Phillips, 1985: 17-20).

The law required 'efficient exploitation' of a plot in order to not be subject to expropriation and also the complete elimination of non-salaried employment relations. In effect, haciendas were obliged to become efficient capitalist enterprises or risk expropriation. As a result, the process of land redistribution on the coast greatly increased but it lacked the support of other policies, mainly technical assistance and credit. The cooperatives created by IERAC and the productive plans they were incorporated into often failed as peasants were unable to pay back the credits they had taken out to purchase their land. As a result IERAC, during the course of the following decade, dispossessed the majority of ex-workers and handed over their lands to an emerging class of capitalist producers. Hacienda workers had become peasants only to become workers once again. Cooperatives were underfunded and therefore unable to bring large tracts of land into production despite a productive plan and credit scheme based on market efficient use of all the land under their control (Striffler, 2002: 129-135). It is also important here to keep in mind the very different nature and application of agrarian reform between Mexico and Ecuador as this has significantly shaped the struggles of both countries' peasant movements. As we saw in chapter one, Mexico's land reform process radically altered the class structure of the countryside, shattering the basis of landed production formerly controlled by a powerful pre-capitalist landlord class and creating a social sector which still controls around half of the country's total agricultural land area. In contrast, the redistributive impact of Ecuador's agrarian reform was far more limited, impacting just 3.4 percent of the surface area (Zapata et al, 2008: 21). In addition, political and economic power remained in the hands of a modernising landlord class and, rather than the institution of social property relations, land reform beneficiaries became de facto small private property owners far more exposed to proletarianising market forces than their Mexican counterparts occupying land under social property relations.

In the coastal provinces of Los Rios and El Oro, cacao producers in FENOCIN's provincial organisations of UNOCAR (*Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas de Los Ríos*) and UROCAL (*Unión Regional de Organizaciones Campesinas del Litoral*) were part of the national movement to push for the application of the land reform of 1973. As we saw in chapter one, prior to land reform rural property relations on the coast were complex and highly diverse, ranging from various forms of hacienda production combining tenant farmers and wage labourers with hacienda specific obligations to landlords. In the case of UROCAL, its

members occupied cacao plots (worked under the 'redención' system¹⁰) on the edge of hacienda Tenguel, a 20,000 hectare banana plantation owned by the United Fruit Company (UFC) and spanning the provinces of Guayas, El Oro and Azuay. Following the cacao collapse of the 1920s, Tenguel was bought by an Ecuadorian Bank (Banco Territorial) and eventually sold to the UFC in the late-1930s. In the intervening years the bank, lacking the capacity to administer a hacienda of Tenguel's size, had either rented out sections of the estate to individual producers or simply left peasants to occupy and cultivate the abandoned land (Striffler, 2002: 27). Once UFC took over it began intensive banana production that radically changed hacienda's production relations. Peasants retained their subsistence and cacao plots under the 'redención' system while at the same time, as Striffler's (2002) study shows, an elaborate system of labour control was employed by UFC. The company had its own police force, controlled transport in and out of the hacienda and owned all infrastructure, including workers' housing. It applied a Fordist system of management and discipline, including high wages, exceptional benefits and considerable paternalism. These practices would be used and reworked by workers and their families, transforming them into an oppositional culture that would drive land invasions and eventually force UFC from the country (Ibid: 43-48). Contrastingly, many of the landlords in the canton of Vines where UNOCAR was based were absentee and so 'precarious' tenants were able to organise themselves and apply to IERAC for expropriation without a great deal of resistance from landowners. Arnaldo Banchen, former FENOCIN national finance secretary and ex-leader of UNOCAR, describes the process:

'First we formed an agrarian cooperative and the government legalised us. With this legal recognition we could go to IERAC, as we were wage workers on the hacienda, and we said to IERAC that this is where I work and this part corresponds to me. There were also precarious workers who paid the hacienda owner in kind in order to rent a piece of land and they did the same. Now our lands are where we were born, where we used to work. It wasn't very conflictive; sometimes the landowners threatened us but it really wasn't a violent process'. Arnaldo Banchen, former leader of UNOCAR y ex-finance secretary of FENOCIN (1995-1999) (24 April 2013, Vines, Los Ríos).

In 1962 hacienda Tenguel was taken over by organised ex-workers following a decade long conflict over deteriorating working conditions and labour cut backs on the estate as UFC experimented with arrangements in which the company itself would no longer be involved in direct production. These experiments threatened the workers' access to employment

¹⁰ At the onset of the cacao boom in the late 19th century, many Andean peasants left their home regions to colonise the largely unpopulated coastal plain on landlords' uncultivated estates. There they cleared, planted, and then worked for a number of years until production began, at which point the landowner retook charge of the land and paid the worker a fixed sum for each plant (Cosse, 1984: 22).

and to land which they primarily dedicated to cacao production (Striffler, 2002: 98). In 1974, following sustained collective action by workers, UFC withdrew from Tenguel and its lands were divided among the workers. Tenguel's land reform beneficiaries and those of neighbouring haciendas united to form UROCAL which then joined FENOC, now FENOCIN. IERAC's productive plan for Tenguel was based on collective production through the creation of four relatively large cooperatives of 160 families in which each household would have access to their own one hectare plot for subsistence and work collectively another 1,600 hectares. However, the reality of IERAC's underfunding meant that effectively each family accessed around 10 hectares that soon came to be worked on a de facto private household basis. Under resourced, many of these supposedly 'communal' lands came to be sold individually to local capitalists by land reform beneficiaries over the following years (Ibid: 135). In the case of UNOCAR, during the land reform process members each received, on average, between five and ten hectares of land. Again, the results were limited primarily to redistribution without the necessary extension services to make living from the land a viable option and many beneficiaries were similarly forced to sell the land they had won to local capitalists. From when UNOCAR's members received their land up until today, those that remain on their plots have almost all had to combine peasant production of cacao and banana with permanent wage work, typically on nearby banana plantations that operate year round.

On the coast as a whole the underfunding of both IERAC and the agrarian reform cooperatives meant that beneficiaries were often unable to bring all of their land into production. With peasants already indebted to the government and with many unable to meet repayment obligations given their inability to cultivate all of their land, they became prey to highly capitalised neighbouring banana plantations looking to expand their holdings (Striffler, 2002: 135). From the moment that FENOCIN's coastal peasants gained access to land they were dependent on the market for their production and reproduction strategies, yet underfunded, under-resourced, and surrounded by highly capital intensive capitalist production units with which they had to compete. Having taken out state loans to purchase the land they were obliged to continue producing bananas on the basis of IERAC's productive plan. This plan, which in turn assumed state support that was never forthcoming, aimed to repay these state loans through a continuation of banana export production, now under collective rather than a private property regime. Given their lack of state support, loan repayments for the majority became impossible and many of UNOCAR and UROCAL's members were forced to sell most of the land they had gained and work full time either on

the plantations or increasingly in urban areas, especially the sprawling port city of Guayaquil. They were left with small plots, primarily devoted to cacao production as it is much less labour and input intensive than banana cultivation, on the basis of seeking relative autonomy from commodity markets and dependence on relatively stable sources wage labour on the region's export plantations. As we will see in chapter three, the cacao plot acts more as a wage supplement rather than the central component of peasants' reproduction strategies for the majority of FENOCIN's coastal members. IERAC's underfunding and subsequent peasant struggles to remain on the land, as opposed to previous struggles to gain access to it has, according to Arnaldo Banchen and UROCAL's leader Jouaquin Vazquez, led to the significant weakening of both organisations. Both groups shifted from representing a class of rural wage and tenant labourers that struggled for land, which many subsequently lost, to becoming managers of production cooperatives of which they had no prior experience. This lack of experience was exacerbated by direct competition from surrounding large-scale capitalist production units and increasingly competitive and deregulated markets for their products. Following redistribution both organisations dedicated themselves to representing solely land reform beneficiaries. As many of these were being forced to sell their plots and become wage labourers once more, they no longer found their interests represented by UNOCAR or UROCAL. The organisations found themselves representing a dwindling number of smallholder peasants with a tenuous hold on their land, the majority forced to depend on credit from usurious intermediaries to stay on their plots, and surrounded by massive capitalised banana plantations looking to expand their operations.

The 1983 El Niño event had a massive impact on UROCAL's land reform cooperative as production collapsed and members began to default on the government loans they had taken out to buy their plots. This provoked conflicts between the organisation and its members as many were forced off their land, accelerating a process of internal class differentiation within UROCAL that continues to this day as the organisations' more successful producers, which now dominate the decision making structures of UROCAL, have been able to buy more land and expand banana production for foreign markets. The majority of UROCAL's small producers dedicate their land mainly to cacao while those with no land no longer have their interests represented by the organisation.

Since its formation FENOCIN has focused on the land struggle and, in a country with one of the highest levels of land concentration in Latin America, access to land remains a central

concern for small and landless peasants. The problem that FENOCIN has faced has been to combine representing the needs of small and medium peasants on the coast - like those of UROCAL and UNOCAR who gained access to land in the 1960s and 1970s - with the very different needs of FENOCIN organisations in the Andes that represent land poor and landless indigenous peasants. While this is a very general categorisation, a 'small' peasant on the coast typically owns from four to six hectares dedicated mostly to market (cacao) production, a 'small' peasant in the Andes owns between a quarter and three hectares of marginal land dedicated almost exclusively to subsistence production with the majority of household income derived from off-farm wage labour. Processes of class formation and the development of class consciousness have differed significantly between the two regions as a result of their distinct history of production relations and the fundamental role of ethnicity in constituting experiences and conceptions of class in the Andes. In both regions the struggle for land was synonymous with the struggle against landowner power and exploitation. However, the relationship between FENOCIN's coastal, predominantly mestizo peasants and landowners, upon which class consciousness and class based struggle were constructed, differed hugely from that of FENOCIN's indigenous Andean peasants. For the latter, exploitation articulated with racism, social and political discrimination and cultural negation on the basis of ethnicity. This has generated struggles in which class and ethnic based demands are mutually constituted and which have generated tensions with FENOCIN's mestizo bases on the coast. Before examining these tensions it is worth reiterating a point made earlier regarding the formation of class consciousness on the basis of a common class enemy in the case of CIOAC.

As in Mexico, the shift from landlessness to land access triggered the formation of new forms of class consciousness based on the struggle to remain on the land against proletarianising market forces rather than a class consciousness built fundamentally in opposition to a pre-capitalist landlord class as it had been during the land struggle era. For FENOCIN's mestizo coastal peasants the struggle to remain on the land generated struggles to attempt to force the Ecuadorian state to carry out its promises of supporting the newly created producer cooperatives. When this failed, FENOCIN's coastal organisations abandoned those forced off the land and increasingly shifted focus to issues of productive and marketing support for those that remained on it. For FENOCIN's Andean peasants, on the other hand, access to land had not eliminated the ethnic discrimination that had historically shaped indigenous class formation. Nor has it tackled the issues of land concentration in the Andes. The struggle to remain on the land and exploitation via the

market, which they shared with their coastal mestizo counterparts, combined with ongoing struggles for further redistribution and social and cultural discrimination that, as we will see in chapter four, led to the development of one of Latin America's most powerful indigenous movements over the course of the 1990s. The power of Andean groups relative to coastal organisations within FENOCIN, and the former's increasing focus on issues of ethnicity and land reform, has damaged organisational unity over the past few decades.

2.10 FENOCIN and Food Sovereignty

Over the last 25 years the FENOCIN national leadership has been dominated by Andean organisations which have focused FENOCIN's struggles - and definitions of food sovereignty - on democratisation of land and water access, agroecology, and indigenous autonomy. Commercialising concerns of coastal peasants have been left to FENOCIN's coastal organisations to resolve independently and this has led to growing criticism from these groups of FENOCIN's 'indigenous control' and of being concerned only with land access, not the ability of peasants to make a living from the land once such access had been achieved. In 2012 FENOCIN experienced an internal division which broadly, though not entirely, followed the geographical contours of coast-Andes. While this was also caused by more recent political divisions which will be discussed next, the deeper issue of historical coastal under representation was a fundamental underlying cause of the fissure that also combines with political factors. To understand the division it is necessary to examine how coastal organisations interpret 'food sovereignty' in the 21st century and how this differs from FENOCIN's national food sovereignty discourse based fundamentally on the expropriation and redistribution of land.

'A redistribution of land isn't suitable now; we already lived this process and now we have land...Agrarian reform in this country is not a problem of redistribution, it's one of productivity, credit, technical assistance and commercialisation. Andrango (FENOCIN president 2008-2013) carries on with an old argument that isn't for today'. Arnaldo Banchen, former leader of UNOCAR y ex-finance secretary of FENOCIN (1995-1999) (24 April 2013, Vinces, Los Ríos).

'Since I ended my term as FENOCIN's vice-president (1999) FENOCIN began to use a more indigenous discourse. Since the growth of CONAIE (La Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador) it became very 'indigenista' in the sense that first the indigenous, then the rest. We on the coast tried to reach agreements with them but it was impossible because they controlled the organisation's (decision making) spaces...We have already

gained land for producers so now we have to address production. It's okay to struggle for land still, but you can't just stay in this without struggling for production and commercialisation'. Joaquin Vazquez, President of UROCAL and former Vice-President of FENOCIN (1995-1999) (30 April 2013, Shumiral, Azuay).

The lack of focus on land redistribution on the coast reflects the class composition of groups like UROCAL and UNOCAR, based as they are on land reform beneficiaries struggling to improve their production and not for access to more land that they would not have the resources to make produce anyway. The long running tensions between FENOCIN's coastal and Andean organisations came to a head in 2012 as a result of Correa's rural policy based on a conception of agrarian reform and food sovereignty that very much coincides with coastal organisations' own ideas regarding these issues (see chapter four for an in depth analysis of this issue). This policy is based on the idea that agrarian reform needs to increase the productivity and efficiency of peasant agriculture while paying lip service to redistribution issues. According to Correa, food sovereignty can be achieved through improved productivity on existing holdings without the need to expropriate and divide large landed properties. Peasant organisations, those on the coast in particular as producers of cash crops, are set to play an important role in administering state resources channelled into productive development. FENOCIN's coastal organisations are overwhelmingly supportive of Correa's government. This support from coastal organisations that have the potential of receiving state projects and resources became increasingly at odds with an ever more critical discourse of Correa's rural policy emanating from FENOCIN's national leadership. Not only did FENOCIN's coastal groups not share this criticism, they also wished to actively distance themselves from association with it believing that it could jeopardise their access to state resources.

'In July last year in FENOCIN's national assembly Andrango put forward that FENOCIN was anti-Correa, anti-government. He represents everyone (in FENOCIN) but the bases don't think this way, they aren't against the government. From there came the internal conflict...he put himself against the bases.' **Arnaldo Banchen (23 April 2013).**

As was argued in the case of CIOAC's peasants in southern Mexico, the struggles for land of FENOCIN's Andean peasants are not founded on experiences of increasingly scarce, informal and oppressive conditions in the labour market, as argued by Bernstein's (2001 & 2006) agrarian question of labour thesis. Although FENOCIN's Andean members, similarly to those of CIOAC, derive the majority of household income from wage labour (in quantitative terms their reproduction strategies are based predominantly on off-farm employment) they

struggle for land - both for access to it and for the ability to make a viable living from it - more on the basis of non-economic values associated with the land and the relative autonomy from the market that viable household production can provide. This argument is corroborated by one of the national leaders of FENACLE (National Federation of Agroindustry Workers), another Ecuadorian VC member organisation, quoted below. He also indicates how this association with the land, and the importance of being 'campesino' rather than 'worker' - as we also saw in the case of CIOAC - makes labour organising among the marginal landholding peasantry particularly difficult:

'In the sierra there's a problem (for union organising) because the conception is of being one hundred percent campesino and the (wage) work that they do, despite their dependence on it, isn't viewed as being important. The people in the sierra say - "I work from Monday to Saturday for the company and in the evening they give me one hour to work my plot". It's the culture, to work to save some money for the family but think more about the family land as their main occupation even though they work five days as wage workers and one day on their land...the children and the women work the land and the money that they (the men) earn is for the family and the land'. Elías Arias, Member of FENACLE's national directive (7 May 2013, Guayaquil).

That demands for land in Ecuador originate primarily from the countryside, and not from increasingly oppressive, informal and insecure urban labour markets as suggested by Bernstein's agrarian question of labour thesis, is not only restricted to the Andes. The struggle of FENOCIN's coastal organisation AACH (Artisan Association of Chucaple) in the province of Esmeraldas for the redistribution of a 500 hectare hacienda bordering its community derives from a fundamental desire of the organisation's members to live as producers rather than workers, not so much because of negative experiences of wage work but much more because of the positive associations held over landed production. In the extract below one of AACH's members describes his situation and explains why he is currently petitioning for the hacienda's division.

'I have 3.5 hectares and ten children. Only one, the youngest, lives here with me...the rest live away. My daughters are married and my other two sons work in the city. If the organisation manages to get the land then the family will return. This is what I want, so that all the family are here together.

(Me) Are your children involved in the process (of petitioning for the land)?

Not directly, but if we (AACH) get it (the land), they'll return'. Antonio Espinoza Sánchez, member of AACH (16 April 2013, Chucaple, Esmeraldas).

2.11 Class Representation within CIOAC and FENOCIN

Both CIOAC and FENOCIN's experiences demonstrate the difficulty of representing all the 'people of the land', all classes of peasantry, within the same organisation. While the food sovereignty literature and the movement itself laud unity in diversity there is often little appreciation of class differentiation among and within the organisations that compose the VC. Both organisations studied have experienced an important shift in their class compositions as a result of their own struggles as landless members gained access to land. The focus and content of demands have moved towards the interests of small landholders and away from the landless and rural labourers in the case of the CIOAC, and remained with the landless and land poor in FENOCIN at the cost of marginalising smallholder land beneficiaries from the agrarian reform era whose calls for productive and commercialising improvements have been left for individual organisations to deal with independently. In both contexts, forces of dispossession and proletarianisation in the neoliberal era (cut back/elimination of state supports for the peasants sector, end to price guarantees and national crop marketing boards, market opening and falling, more volatile prices etc.) have increasingly driven CIOAC and FENOCIN's small peasant producers off their land. This is especially the case for the generations that followed land reform as redistribution processes were gradually cut back and eventually eliminated. As both organisations experienced the gradual transition from a landless to a landholding membership the tensions involved with representing both broad class categories within the same organisation emerged and deepened; CIOAC's end to the struggle for land meant landless and land poor peasants would have to leave the organisation to have their interests served while the hegemony of landless and land poor groups in the Andes that have dominated FENOCIN for the past 25 years have not represented coastal peasants struggling for productive and marketing improvements, a major factor leading to FENOCIN's division. However, this is not to imply that combining the interests of various peasant classes and class fractions is impossible to achieve. In the case of CIOAC and FENOCIN, internal organisational dynamics which have led to the elimination of landless/labour class interests from these organisations' struggles cannot be universalised across Latin American peasant movements on the whole. Brazil's MST (Landless Rural Workers' Movement), one of the region's largest and most influential rural movements, has managed - not without challenges - to combine the demands of a landless and landed mass base. Kröger (2011: 443) suggests that the MST's strategic shift from a narrow agrarian reform process to a more general contestation of multinational capital has helped unite the movement with

sympathetic urban groups and other marginalised (labouring) classes, broadening its support base. Vergara-Camus (2009: 372) also demonstrates how the movement has managed to combine struggles for land as the basis of subsistence for landless peasants with productive and marketing support for already relatively well established producers seeking to successfully integrate into market production.

In the process of CIOAC and FENOCIN's successful land struggles and the shifting organisational class base that has resulted, another important issue emerges for peasant organising in addition to changing nature and (under)representation of certain class interests. In the era when both organisations' mass bases were landless peasants their movements were stronger as members shared common goals focused on, but going beyond, access to land and social justice issues. This changed as land was won but not worked collectively as members' demands for individual, household autonomy on the basis of prioritising rights to a family plot took precedence over communal systems of control and production. Communal land was almost always demanded and granted as part of any land redistribution in both countries, but this tended to be created with family access to grazing and other services in mind rather than fostering a communally operated system of production. This issue, the individualisation of the peasantry, is recognised by both organisations' leaderships as a significant factor in understanding the weakening of the peasant movement at the national level which has limited their ability to counter neoliberal reforms and defend against forces of peasant impoverishment and dispossession.

'At the beginning all the communities demanded their rights, respect, that they could access land, education, health, with the same rights (as non-indigenous). This meant that the people had the same general objective. This happened and the people had more needs, and these needs aren't very collective, they're more personal. This means that UNORCAC (Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas de Cotacachi) weakened a little...So now the people's needs aren't necessarily focused on the same things. Now what they demand are sources of employment, and UNORCAC can't give them sources of employment. And if a project comes (from government or an NGO), it comes for three, four people. It used to be easy for UNORCAC to be able to help them because there was one idea, one objective. Now there are many objectives and they are not collective, they are individual'. **Ruminahui Anrango, leader of the FENOCIN organisation UNORCAC (6 April 2013, Cotacachi, Imbabura).**

'The people aren't interested in unionising. In the past we could find a reason, which could be that these peasants, agricultural workers, landless peasants, were dreaming of one day having their own land...it was different when we were struggling for land to today when we're involved in government programmes. Because now the people come to us individually wanting a support, a programme for fertilizer, etcetera. They have a need and they come

looking for us. In the past people wanted land, and it was a combined, conflictual struggle and people participated. But this isn't the situation now. They aren't looking for who can help them organise as a union. Now they are thinking about returning to their individual plots and not doing anything that could cause them to lose their jobs'. **José Luis Hernández Andrade, CIOAC national secretary for labour issues (29 January 2013, Mexico City).**

The relative weakening of CIOAC and FENOCIN that followed successful land struggles must also be understood in terms of the generally more fragmented class experiences of a now landed mass base in comparison to their historical class experiences as landless peasants. This fragmentation has impacted on the class consciousness of both organisations' members and the strategies formulated by their leaders to try to address this more fragmented mass base. Not only have forms of exploitation become more opaque than during the land struggle era, mediated as they are through the market rather than embodied in a visible landlord class; they have also become increasingly diverse and harder for their organisations to articulate as part of a coherent strategy and ideology. CIOAC and FENOCIN's peasants reproduce themselves via varying degrees of integration into and dependence on commodity and labour markets as well as subsistence production. An increasingly class-complex mass base (in terms of the diversity of their reproduction strategies), the 'individualisation' of demands following successful land struggles described by CIOAC and FENOCIN leaders above, the relative opacity and diversity of modes of market-mediated exploitation compared to direct landlord control, and the growing dependence of both organisations' mass bases on off-farm wage labour which they are largely unwilling to organise around - all of these factors have combined to weaken peasant movement struggles. The political strategies that both organisations have pursued, built largely on these fundamental shifts in the class characteristics of their mass bases, have also played a major role in determining the capacity of both organisations to effectively represent the interests of their members and will be explored in chapter four. The main point here is that both CIOAC and FENOCIN have struggled to unite a now more diverse and fragmented class mass base in a coherent and consistent manner under neoliberalism than they did during the land struggle era. This is not simply due to the *relatively* more homogenous class bases they had when all were struggling for land. The role of both organisations in developing class consciousness through a collective ideological struggle around a common class enemy - the landlord - was much more effective in mobilising their mass bases than contemporary struggles against 'neoliberalism', 'TNCs', and the many and varied, yet often indirectly experienced forms of exploitation that these entities embody and reproduce. The VC's failure to incorporate the interests of labour or any classes of

producers of export crops into not only its demands but, as importantly, its ideological construction of a potential world to be struggled for, reduces the scope of the movement and its capacity to appeal to and mobilise many of the most marginalised rural social classes.

The move from collective to more individual struggles of the mass bases of both FENOCIN and CIOAC has important implications for how these organisations interpret and struggle for food sovereignty. The reduced representation of rural labour, the landless and the land poor in both organisations has, in the case of the CIOAC, led to the organisation's official stance that agrarian reform based on land redistribution is no longer necessary or desirable and so forms no part of their struggle for food sovereignty. This organisational shift in emphasis must also be understood within the overall context of the impact of Mexico's national land reform era following which around half of the nation's agricultural land is now in peasant hands under social property arrangements. Instead, struggles focus on state support for peasant producers in terms of productive improvement and social development, namely dignified housing, transport infrastructure and decent education and healthcare provision in rural areas. Food sovereignty, interpreted by CIOAC broadly as a national system of food production and distribution based on 'peasant agriculture,' can only be achieved on the basis of these preceding developments. That the more market oriented/dependent peasants that compose CIOAC in many cases already employ wage labour that does not receive the now supposedly obligatory social security or minimum wage is not considered to be in any way important. The class interests of rural wage labour and small peasants are not discussed by CIOAC's leaders and the idea that landowning peasants should have to contribute to workers' social security is considered impossible, something that CIOAC would fight *against* if necessary, on the basis that it would punish already impoverished landholding producers. CIOAC's national secretary for labour issues confirms the organisation's stance in the interview extract below:

*'The vast majority of workers in the countryside don't work for big landowners, they work for their neighbour. How can you organise unions **against** (his emphasis) these small producers? From the point of view of justice it's an aberration because they (small producers) would be left less protected because of union action. They are smallholders with four or five hectares; they aren't a great employer of labour. In the countryside where there's an important concentration of agricultural workers is in the irrigation zones of the north'.*
José Luis Hernández Andrade, (29 January 2013, Mexico City).

In the case of FENOCIN, conceptions of food sovereignty vary enormously between the coast and the Andes. While Ecuador's land reform process on the national scale had far more limited redistributive effects than was the case for Mexico, as we saw above,

significant regional divergences emerged between the coast and the Andes with land access remaining far more restricted in the latter than in the former. However, as with CIOAC, in neither region does agricultural labour have a voice in these conceptions and its role in any 'food sovereign' society is never considered even when, like with CIOAC, many of FENOCIN's already struggling producers employ seasonal wage labour and would surely do so more if their goals relating to the promotion of peasant agriculture were to be achieved.

While the Andean dominated leadership of the FENOCIN has interpreted food sovereignty as both national and regional systems of food production and distribution on the basis of agroecology and land redistribution, the organisation's coastal organisations have different, under-represented conceptions. Food sovereignty is less of a focus than in the Andes as coastal peasants have always produced most, if not all of their crops for export. While they tend to support the idea of a national system for staples production and distribution it is not something they struggle for, and neither is agroecology widely practiced or valued (apart from UROCAL which has a well established certification system for organic banana and cacao). They struggle for state support for improved production capacity, marketing channels and price stability/security for export crops and this does not find support either in FENOCIN's struggles nationally or those of the VC internationally. They actively seek improved integration into world markets rather than extraction from it, but these issues are not taken up by either FENOCIN or the food sovereignty movement in general. This is despite the fact that issues relating to cash crop production are central areas of concern for the majority of both organisations' peasants. As such, the food sovereignty discourse not only under represents or fails to represent entirely a whole class of the peasantry; rural labour, but also selectively represents small and medium peasants in terms of staple production while ignoring cash crop issues that are so integral to most peasant household reproduction strategies. Both organisations' experiences with attempting to foster collectivised production systems at local levels also demonstrates that the VC's promotion of collective forms of peasant agriculture is problematic. While critical of market led agrarian reform (MLAR) in its various guises with its focus on individual property rights, it would appear, at least in the cases of Mexico and Ecuador, that much of the peasantry is eager to secure individual control of a landholding over participation in a collective system. The latter is not rejected, especially in terms of marketing and credit channels where peasant access favours collective association. However, when it comes to decisions over production, which are the most important for securing household production and

reproduction, and ultimately access to their land, CIOAC and FENOCIN's members have been and remain strongly in favour of individual control.

2.12 CIOAC, FENOCIN and the Via Campesina: Class Bases, Collaboration and Conflict

The VC's stated role is as an institutional space for bringing together international peasant movements across the globe to represent the interests of small farmer/peasant agriculture on a global scale. It is therefore natural to assume that the first point of 'unity in diversity' and the promotion of collaboration would be at the national level, in this case between the various VC organisations within Mexico and Ecuador. As noted by Borras (2010) however, the VC and its proponents have preferred to publicise the unity of the movement rather than any potential frictions or even conflicts that are sure to exist within such a diverse movement. As has already been shown, important class based tensions within both CIOAC and FENOCIN have significantly shaped their organisational forms and development. Other VC organisations in both countries also represent specific constellations of class interests that may promote or inhibit collaboration with their national counterparts. This section will examine how the class bases of other VC organisations in Mexico and Ecuador impact their conceptions of food sovereignty and how this contributes to conflict and collaboration between them.

For FENOCIN (its official stance representing landless/land-poor indigenous Andean peasants), agrarian reform based on land redistribution and expropriation of large holdings is a prerequisite for 'food sovereignty'. This official position puts it at odds with FENACLE, an organisation that represents agricultural workers mainly on coastal banana plantations that has recently begun organising highland floricultural workers. That FENACLE's mass base of rural workers organised around labour issues on export plantations should conceive of and struggle for food sovereignty in a very different way to FENOCIN, with a mass base of landed, land-poor and landless peasants, is an issue that the VC and supporters of the FSM in general have failed to adequately address. The differing class bases of national peasant organisations are a major source of tensions within national peasant movements that appears non-existent in much of the FSM literature (Borras, 2008, is a notable exception). Proponents of peasant agriculture tend to assume a unity of purpose, action and ideology that correspond to these organisations' stated commitments to shared goals put forward in

official documents and national and international meetings. These statements and professed unity with other rural movements both nationally and internationally disguise the everyday practices of these organisations that often hinder rather than foster unity, with differences in organisations' class bases, politics and ideologies three major factors determining the relative levels of conflict and/or collaboration within national peasant movements. This section will focus on how the first of these factors, organisational class bases, shape relationships between FENOCIN, CIOAC and other VC members in Ecuador and Mexico. Politics, ideology and other factors may be equally if not more important than class base depending on specific contexts and will be examined in more detail in chapter four.

In June 2012 FENOCIN, in collaboration with the CNC-EA (National Campesino Confederation Eloy Alfaro), another of Ecuador's VC member organisations, presented a new land law proposal to the National Assembly (the issues surrounding this proposal are discussed in detail in chapter four). The CNC-EA is based overwhelmingly in the Ecuadorian Andes and represents organisations with very similar class bases as those of FENOCIN's Andean groups. For FENACLE the proposal, whose fundamental point of contention was the plan to expropriate landholdings of 500 hectares or more on the coast, and 200 hectares and above in the Andes, represented a significant threat to their own members, the vast majority of which work on large plantations that would be subject to expropriation if the land law proposal were implemented.

*'They collected signatures. We as FENACLE didn't agree because there were issues we didn't share...The law proposes limiting monopolies with a maximum of 500 hectares. We were worried because we have unions in businesses that own over 2000 hectares. So what happens to the workers? Passing this law the union automatically disappears. The law could benefit one but punish another. And we can't let this happen. We don't defend the businesses, but we defend the workers that would suffer the consequences. As FENACLE they're going to damage us, so we weren't in agreement with them (FENOCIN). We kept our distance because they don't consider the unions'. **Elías Arias (7 May 2013).***

FENACLE saw FENOCIN's initiative as not only against the interests of its bases, but also as something potentially damaging to its members. This reflects the importance of analysing disunity in diversity instead of simply assuming unity without any foundation on which to do so. Although both organisations subscribe to VC's basic principle of food sovereignty, beliefs as to what the concept means and how it should be carried out vary considerably between the two organisations as a consequence of their different class bases. For FENACLE, unlike FENOCIN, food sovereignty does not necessarily require expropriation of existing plantations, rather the reform of their operations to provide better wages and

working conditions for rural labour. FENOCIN's conceptualisation of food sovereignty as involving primarily national staples produced agroecologically is also at odds with export plantation production, something that FENACLE deems beneficial not only for Ecuador as a nation but also as a means of valuable and valued employment for and by workers themselves. As highlighted by Edelman (2013) the role of export production in any 'food sovereign' system has yet to be addressed comprehensively by the VC and the food sovereignty literature. It is clear that how VC organisations such as CIOAC and FENOCIN incorporate the demands of their export crop producing members into their national strategies for food sovereignty is still an issue, especially for FENOCIN whose coastal peasants, as discussed above, consider their needs as cacao producers at best under-represented by the organisation. However, while FENOCIN's coastal peasants demand resources and infrastructure to enable them to improve production and better compete on the world market with their cash crops, FENACLE's focus is not the improvement of production per se but the improvement of employment conditions, wages and possibilities for labour organising on existing plantations. As seen with the land law proposal, the interests of rural plantation workers and landed peasants can be contradictory and inhibit the peasant movement as a whole if it attempts to unify all 'people of the land' under one homogenising discourse. In this case the generalised demand for land redistribution based on extension limits is claimed by FENOCIN to be in the interests of 'the peasantry' as if different classes of peasants were non-existent and the results of such a policy without class-specific effects, specifically to the potential detriment of plantation workers.

The different class bases of Mexico's VC organisations is also a source of tension and outright conflict that has inhibited the peasant movement nationally. ANEC (National Association of Commercialising Enterprises) emerged in the aftermath of NAFTA coming into force on 1 January 1994, and continues to mobilise against what it sees as the aggressive implementation of neoliberal policies that it claims are devastating peasant livelihoods and communities, and forcing more and more small and medium sized producers off their lands. ANEC established to fill the vacuum left by CONASUPO, the state run agency responsible for monitoring and supporting the basic grain markets that was completely dismantled forcing producers to create their own channels to market their harvests. It joined the VC in 1996 and aims to address producers' social and economic needs via mutual support, democratic participation, cooperative management as well as seeking out the best markets for grain. The association formed as a response by formerly state managed Peasant Commercialising Enterprises to coordinate their dispersed activities

around the country and produce policy proposals to present to government in favour of peasant production (Antal et al, 2010: 66). ANEC is today composed of around 230 such enterprises in 19 states and aims to promote this model at local, regional and national levels through the direct participation of basic grain producing peasants in both marketing of their produce and transforming policies related to the conditions of their existence, production and marketing (ANEC, 2003: 13). However, the mass base of ANEC is composed of relatively well established small-medium sized grain producers with a history of state supported production of basic grains. Many of ANEC's producers are also net buyers of labour, unlike CIOAC's who are overwhelmingly net sellers. The demands of its members reflect this class composition, based as they are on production issues, access to credit and improved marketing channels. This contrasts with the majority of CIOAC's mass base of small peasants who, particularly in the southern states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero, have had minimal state productive support, occupy marginal lands typically of under two hectares, and whose production of basic grains is almost solely for subsistence with undercapitalised, unproductive coffee production combined with (typically seasonal) wage labour as a basis for family income.

According to the CIOAC leadership, ANEC's focus on commercialising issues of relatively successful grain producing peasants is not only distanced from their own struggles to secure the basic conditions of life in the countryside for their members, but can even represent a direct threat to their own organisations. Although the organisational tensions between CIOAC and ANEC are in large part based on membership class mass base, their differences cannot be reduced to class alone and also involve important political and ideological factors that will be discussed in chapter four. CIOAC claims that some of its own members who gained land as a result of the organisation's struggles, and that have benefitted subsequently from state supports achieved through further organisational mobilisations, have left and joined ANEC to benefit from its marketing knowledge and infrastructure. According to José Dolores López, CIOAC's national secretary, the difference between CIOAC and ANEC is fundamental, based on the different peasant groups (classes) both organisations represent:

'They (ANEC) work with people that are already producing well, they work with people already constituted in a project. That is the great difference because we work the whole process from below, but they don't. They struggle for resources (from government) for businesses, for social enterprises, mainly from SAGARPA (The Ministry of Agriculture). Their work is more business oriented, ours is more

socially focused'. **José Dolores López Barrios, CIOAC's national secretary (11 February 2013, Mexico City).**

ANEC's work is centred on the struggle for food sovereignty as this concept relates far more directly to the needs and desires of its mass base than those of CIOAC. The former have concrete proposals for what a food sovereign society entails and the necessary reforms that need to take place to current rural policy in order to achieve this. One of ANEC's central proposals for beginning to tackle Mexico's lack of food sovereignty is the reform of PROCAMPO, a subsidy programme for corn producers. This proposal, while potentially beneficial to the great majority of Mexico's small-medium producers, is not supported by CIOAC which interprets the subsidy very differently to ANEC due primarily to the class differences between the organisations' mass bases. PROCAMPO was introduced to support producers following the implementation of NAFTA in 1994 and the sharp decline in domestic prices that Mexico's formerly state-supported producers experienced. Cash transfers are made on a per hectare basis across the whole country for a range of basic crops with payments regressively distributed, proportional to area planted (Sadoulet et al, 2001: 6-7). The regressive nature of the subsidy means that, in effect, it acts as a poverty subsidy rather than a productive one when given to small-scale, subsistence peasants. According to Victor Suarez, ANEC's national leader, this subsidy is poorly distributed, does not contribute to productive development, and must be reformed in order to promote national self-sufficiency in staple food crops. ANEC proposes a 30 hectare limit for assistance (currently 100), with money saved from not supporting large producers used to: double assistance to producers of under 1Ha; increase by 75% assistance to producers with 1.1-5Ha; increase by 50% those with 5.1-10 hectares; and keep the same level of assistance to those with 10.1 - 30 hectares (Suarez, 2010).

Despite such measures potentially benefitting many of CIOAC's own members the organisation has not supported ANEC's proposals. Firstly, many of CIOAC's members do not receive PROCAMPO in the first place and the organisation focuses much energy on assisting members with the necessary paperwork to register for the programme and formalise their legal rights to tenancy. ANEC's mass base of small-medium peasant producers with established tenancy contrasts with CIOAC's own whose members' production is typically geared more towards subsistence/survival than on productive improvement. Whereas ANEC conceives of PROCAMPO as a production subsidy with limited effectiveness in its current forms given its regressive distribution and poor administration, CIOAC conceives of PROCAMPO as a survival subsidy. Its members are keen to access it not so they can invest in

improving their land but as an income subsidy to better meet basic household needs. It provides the household with a little extra space or relative autonomy from labour and commodity markets, a small income supplement to meet basic needs. The contradiction between CIOAC's stated commitment to promotion of peasant production and its need to keep its uncompetitive, unproductive and under-resourced members on their land at any cost is recognised by CIOAC's leaders as something very difficult to resolve:

'Socially and politically PROCAMPO should continue (as it is). In my opinion the programme is terrible; many members don't even plant corn but they still receive PROCAMPO and really it should be based on amount produced, not land area. The problem is that we're all comfortable with it as it is - we and the government. The government gets stability in the countryside with this kind of subsidy and we're not going to try to make changes that in the end could damage our producers, many of which receive the subsidy without cultivating the land'. Raúl Abarca, CIOAC Head of Productive Projects in the state of Chiapas (31 October 2012, Tuxtla Gutierrez).

Originating from the differing class bases of ANEC and CIOAC arise distinct interpretations and varying proposals for rural policy reform that, as had been demonstrated, can generate contradictory stances on the nature and content of key aspects of rural struggle¹¹. These differences can be so great that they break out into open conflict that severs any ties between national level VC members organisations despite the latter's promotion of 'unity' among diversity and its core principles and proposals that supposedly all member organisations adhere to. Currently there is no joint work or even communication between CIOAC and ANEC, with the latter equating the former's focus of struggle on state resources for rural social development with clientelism. In contrast, ANEC claims that its own demands for productive development (for a relatively better-off class of production focused, market-oriented staples producing peasants), is the only organisation really struggling for food sovereignty and peasant led rural policy.

2.13 Concluding Comments

This chapter has examined the class dynamics of contemporary peasant organising in Mexico and Ecuador at two levels; firstly within two national level VC organisations and secondly between these organisations and other VC organisations in the two countries. It has done so in an attempt to highlight the importance of peasant class and processes of

¹¹ The differences and tension between CIOAC and ANEC are as political in nature as they are class-based (see chapter four).

peasant class differentiation that have shaped, and continue to shape, peasant organisations, their struggles, and the potential for alliance and conflict within the FSM as a consequence of class dynamics. Peasant organisations' interpretations of, and demands for, food sovereignty are significantly influenced by the historical development of their mass bases in their national contexts and the relationships with their national states and governments. Their class bases have changed significantly as a result of their own struggles embedded in nationally and regionally specific dynamics of capitalist development, which have of course also been shaped by phases of capital accumulation on a world scale. This has resulted in a shifting balance of class forces within CIOAC and FENOCIN which has shaped the nature and content of their demands and struggles over time.

We have seen that rural labour is not represented by either CIOAC or FENOCIN in the present day as both organisations have moved from representing predominantly landless to landed (even if land poor) peasants from the late 1960s onwards. In turn, non-land based components of their landed members' reproduction strategies, namely (growing) dependence on off-farm wage labour, are likewise not represented or significantly under-represented. As a result, both organisations' conceptions of food sovereignty and their demands for 'rural development' more generally, in no way represent the specific interests of rural labour, not only as a distinct class but as a class fraction of land-poor/semi-proletarianised peasants forced to depend to varying degrees on the labour market for their reproduction. Out of all of the VC organisations operating in both countries only FENACLE in Ecuador focuses on rural labour issues and, as discussed above, their demands and interpretations of food sovereignty are often contradictory to those of other VC organisations that represent landed peasants. This lack of focus on rural labour issues is a major problem for the VC and the food sovereignty movement more generally that claims to represent all 'people of the land' given the overwhelming dependence on wage labour for the social reproduction of the peasantry in both countries and in Latin America as a whole. The lack of recognition of, and engagement with, the wage labour component of peasant reproduction strategies by the majority of Mexico and Ecuador's peasant movements and the VC in general needs to be addressed if labour is to be better represented in contemporary agrarian movements in Latin America. This chapter has also shown that the under-representation of landless and land-poor peasants has been a major source of tensions and divisions for both CIOAC and FENOCIN. The former claims that land reform is no longer necessary for the economic and social development of Mexico's countryside and does not represent a necessary component of a food sovereign Mexico.

However, pressure on land in south eastern Mexico is a central concern for many of its members, as demonstrated by the EZLN uprising and defection of many of CIOAC's members whose need for land was not being represented by their organisation. FENOCIN's deeper, national division in 2012 was based on the internal division between the production based demands of landed, coastal peasants and the calls for democratisation of land and water access by the organisation's more land poor and landless Andean members. However, although the demands of the landless and landed are very different in content, they are not necessarily contradictory in nature. The contradiction lies in the organisational strategy required to meet these demands; production based supports are best achieved via proposal and dialogue with state-legitimizing institutions with recourse to (generally peaceful) mass mobilisations if these demands are not addressed. However, demands for land made on a neoliberal state typically require more militant tactics of land invasions that may jeopardise an organisation's work on production based issues if it tries to combine the two sets of class based demands.

Both the CIOAC and FENOCIN leaderships have, historically, attempted to struggle for the promotion of peasant production and livelihoods in collective rather than individual terms. This has often been at odds with peasant demands in Ecuador and in Southeast Mexico for individual rights to land taking precedence over, while in no way rejecting, collective systems. Following redistribution both organisations' leadership attribute the weakening of the peasant movement nationally at least in part to the changing nature of peasant demands from a collective to a more individual basis. FENOCIN's cacao producers on Ecuador's coast and CIOAC's coffee growers in Southeast Mexico divided ex-estates into individual plots rather than organising collective control over existing enterprises against the desires of their organisations' national leaders who pushed for collective systems. This raises some important questions for the food sovereignty movement as to whether peasant agriculture with production organised on an individual family farm/plot basis (production, not marketing, credit and input associations etc. which both organisations' peasants are actively working to establish) could meet national/regional/international demand for food if it were to replace the contemporary corporate food regime. Also, the issue of peasant production of export crops has not been properly addressed by the VC, another important omission given that so many peasants depend on this and their interests are currently under represented in food sovereignty discussions and mobilisations.

The second part of the chapter analysed differences in the class bases of CIOAC and FENOCIN in comparison to other national level VC organisations, highlighting how this

significantly impacts the relationship between national peasant organisations, in this case their varying and often contradictory interpretations of food sovereignty. These differences demonstrate the problem of assuming unity in diversity based on a wide range of organisations' stated commitment to broad principles such as food sovereignty, agrarian reform, rights to land etc. without interrogating how these issues are defined and addressed by specific organisations that represent different rural classes. By assuming a unity of purpose while ignoring class based differences among 'people of the land', the VC and proponents of peasant agriculture are blind to one of the most pressing issues that needs to be addressed if a serious countermovement to the neoliberal food regime is to be developed. Although VC organisations are massively diverse in class terms, often with conflicting interests, that does not mean that they cannot engage in important joint work and forge cross-class alliances over many key issues. However, this will not take place unless the class bases of these organisations are analysed, first at the national levels, in order to locate specific points of convergence in which alliances can be developed. At present the VC in both Mexico and Ecuador acts as merely a talking shop where contemporary rural issues are discussed by national organisation leaders, rather than acting as a space for planning and engaging in joint action to contest neoliberal food and agricultural policies.

Chapter 3. Autonomy and the Market: Peasant Production and Reproduction Strategies under Neoliberalism

Having examined the shifting class compositions of CIOAC and FENOCIN, this chapter will analyse the specific production and reproduction strategies of both organisations' bases. It will argue that peasant struggles for 'autonomy' both *from* and *within* the market have significantly shaped past and contemporary relations of production and reproduction in rural Mexico and Ecuador. The development of capitalism in the countryside of both countries has dispossessed, subsumed, but also consolidated various classes of the peasantry and the following pages will analyse the role of capital, the peasantry, and the state in shaping these relations in Mexico's coffee and Ecuador's cacao sectors. It will argue that CIOAC and FENOCIN's small, landholding peasants in both sectors are currently being exposed to new forces of capitalist development based on quality driven coffee and cacao market dynamics that attempt to wrest further control of production from them, reducing one aspect of peasant autonomy - control of the labour process, while potentially consolidating another - access to, and viability of, the land itself. It will also contend that the food sovereignty movement has failed to engage with and articulate the role of peasant produced cash crops within its vision, a major weakness given the importance of these crops to the production and reproduction strategies of many of the Via Campesina's (VC) grassroots members and an integral component of their struggles for autonomy.

3.1 Peasant Autonomy

Throughout this chapter 'peasant autonomy' refers to economic rather than political or other forms of autonomy. It refers to relative autonomy from the imperatives of the market for survival, that is, peasant household capacity to make decisions regarding their livelihoods not determined entirely by market forces, be they in commodity or labour markets. This autonomy is inextricably linked to ownership or control of land and to decisions regarding the production process and use of the means of production. At its core is the concern for ensuring that the household can meet its own subsistence requirements year on year. However, derived from this most basic concern comes the inseparably linked

desire for autonomy over decisions regarding what is produced and how, household control of production from seed to final product, and its sale or consumption. This desire for an element of control over the household's production and reproduction strategies is shaped by experiences, direct or indirect, of increasing fragmentation of classes of labour in the global South under neoliberal globalisation; labour is being expelled from the countryside while urbanisation has been decoupled from industrialisation and the growth of sources of formal wage employment (Bernstein, 2009; Davis, 2004). By remaining on the land, marginalised peasants deem themselves to have a far greater control over their destiny and the ability to meet household reproduction needs than they would if they were dispossessed and forced to depend entirely on wage labour for survival. Even when, as is the case for many small peasant producers in Mexico and Ecuador today, the majority of household income is derived from various forms of wage labour, the ability to produce their own means of subsistence as a fall back in the context of increasingly scarce, informal and unpredictable wage employment is a highly valued element of autonomy from the market. The struggle of CIOAC and FENOCIN peasants to make a viable living from the land must be understood as a struggle to improve the conditions of, and returns for, peasant production in order to thereby reduce, or even eliminate, the need for labour market integration.

As we will see in more detail below, recent developments in the coffee and cacao sectors in Mexico and Ecuador respectively have seen transnational export companies attempting to take increasing control of the production process, further subsuming the peasant labour process to capital as a response to growing quality demands for chocolate and coffee in expanding Northern niche markets. As a result, growers face a contradiction in their struggle for autonomy - hand over important production decisions to the agents of capital, consolidating peasants' hold on the land and reducing their dependence on the labour market (increasing relative autonomy from the [labour] market) at the expense of significantly reducing control over productive decisions and the labour process itself (autonomy within the market); or refuse to cede such control to capital, retaining a greater degree of control over the labour process but with a relatively higher level of dependence on labour markets and at greater risk from the immiserating, and potentially proletarianising forces of volatile primary commodity markets. This entails retaining the power of decision making over production but at the expense of threatening peasants' long-term viability; they have to compete with increasingly capitalised producers and are potentially at risk of being forced from the land in order to survive.

The following section will begin by examining how 'autonomy' is understood in much of the literature on the peasantry and how this compares and contrasts with this chapter's own understanding. The impacts of the very different landed property relations between Mexico and Ecuador under which CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao smallholders base their production and reproduction strategies will then be discussed in relation to how this shapes autonomous struggles. The chapter will then examine the specific struggles for autonomy carried out by CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao producers in southeast Mexico and coastal Ecuador respectively. It will do so by investigating the changing nature of such struggles from their initial role in pushing for redistributive land reform as plantation workers, to subsequent efforts to retain their land as viable producers in the face of neoliberal restructuring, and the lack of representation of these struggles in the contemporary FSM. The final section will look at an important contemporary development affecting both sets of producers; the expansion of transnational coffee and cacao export firms into production via arrangements with producers that closely resemble contract farming. The nature of these arrangements and the reasons for entering into them, both on the part of capital and of peasant producers, will be explored with an emphasis on what this signifies for peasant autonomy.

3.2 Land as Autonomy

'Peasant autonomy' is here a relative term given that all of Mexico and Ecuador's coffee and cacao producers are integrated into the market as commodity producers, and the vast majority of households as wage labourers as well. However, the degree of control they exert over production and livelihood decisions is based on their continued ownership of the land - the foundation of autonomy. While past struggles of coffee and cacao plantation workers in Mexico and Ecuador for redistribution of the land on which they worked may appear very different in nature to contemporary struggles for autonomy based on retaining hold on land won, the underlying desire for control of production and therefore an element of security of livelihood still lies at its core.

Unlike capitalist producers who are fully integrated into the market, landholding peasants typically have a greater degree of autonomy regarding their degree of market integration. The fact that they retain ownership of the land - a 'self-controlled resource base' in Ploeg's (2010) terminology - gives them a certain degree of flexibility over production decisions in

order to meet household reproduction requirements year on year. In the case of CIOAC's coffee and FENOCIN's cacao producers, these decisions rest primarily on striking a balance between household labour time dedicated to a) cash crop production; b) subsistence production; and c) off-(family) farm work. Wood's (2002) distinction between the market as an *imperative* or an *opportunity* is useful for analysing peasant autonomy in the context of peasant coffee and cacao producers in Mexico and Ecuador. As Wood highlights, it is difficult to determine at which point a producer becomes dependent on the market for survival short of complete separation from the means of production (Ibid: 54). However, for fully capitalist producers the market presents itself as an imperative; their survival depends on it, generating competition between similar capitalists to produce the most for the lowest cost (Ibid: 53). Cash crop producing peasants, on the other hand, do not always face this same situation as their survival often depends on combining production for the market with subsistence production and other varied forms and degrees of dependence on off-farm work; their control of the land is not based on the full commodification of either production or labour. Again, in Woods' terms, in the sense that they must sell what they produce in order to buy what they cannot (rather than being compelled to continually improve the productive forces and reduce unit costs through reinvestment of surplus as a capitalist would), non-capitalist producers have a certain 'room for manoeuvre' (Ibid: 62). 'Room for manoeuvre', or relative space to exercise autonomy from the market that land access confers, enables CIOAC and FENOCIN's cash crop producing peasants to adjust production to both changing commercial demand and their own consumption needs in ways and degrees ruled out by capitalist competition. This autonomy is of course relative as virtually all peasant households are integrated into commodity and labour markets to varying extents. Production is therefore conditioned to some degree by the level of this integration, as well as by landed property arrangements that (relatively) restrict (e.g. private property in Ecuador) or expand (e.g. social property in Mexico) the degree to which such autonomy can be exercised (examined below). However, household production and reproduction decisions can and do shift according to changing market conditions, with labour time spent on cash crop production, subsistence crop production, and wage labour varying in response to such changes. This (relative) autonomy over household labour acts as a buffer against adversity in commodity and labour markets in particular, with for example a reversion to a focus on subsistence production at times when both of these markets are adverse, or by drawing family labour from subsistence production and wage work when cash crop prices are high.

Most of the literature that engages with autonomy (Ploeg, 2008 & 2010; Barkin, 2006; Schneider & Niederle, 2010; Isakson, 2009; Brookfield & Parsons, 2011) equates it with the capacity of landed peasants to withdraw from *commodity* markets, i.e. increasing subsistence production, reducing cash crop production, and thereby reducing commoditisation of peasant production. Increasing production for the market, on the other hand, increases commoditisation and market integration (and dependence) and, in turn, reduces autonomy from the market. According to Ploeg (2010: 6), self-provisioning augments and sustains autonomy as it enlarges the capacity of the peasantry to reproduce itself under any conditions. Control over the means of production, the basis for the household to secure its own subsistence and survival even if dependent on the market (commodities and labour) for anything more than that, represents the main component in peasant interpretations of, and aspirations for, 'autonomy'. As household reproduction becomes increasingly difficult via simple commodity production for increasingly globalised and competitive markets, and sources of wage labour become increasingly insecure, oppressive, and scarce (Bernstein, 2009: 250), the ability of the household to produce its own means of subsistence without reliance on the market becomes even more highly sought after. However, struggles for autonomy are not limited to withdrawal from commodity markets and a move towards self-provisioning. With some degree of integration into commodity markets a necessity for the vast majority of the peasantry in the contemporary era, we will see that struggles to carve out spaces of relative autonomy *within* commodity markets in the form of shaping the terms of this integration and exerting an element of control over production and marketing decisions, is also a key element of autonomous struggles.

Two fundamental elements of autonomy need to be examined in combination in order to understand the nature of specific peasant struggles in the context of capitalist penetration of the countryside. The first is ownership of the means of production, of the land itself, as a source for providing both household subsistence requirements and monetary income generated from production. It provides a degree of subsistence provisioning that allows (non-market dependent) peasants to exercise a degree of autonomy both *from* and *within* markets. The second aspect of autonomy is control of the labour process. It is how autonomy is exercised and is derived from ownership of the land and the control of household production and labour decisions that this confers. It is exercised in different ways, at different times, and in different locations, with labour time devoted to cash crops, subsistence production and wage labour varying according to market conditions and

household needs. The shifting degrees of focus on each one of these activities is based not on profit maximisation, but on calculating the best use of family labour to ensure the long term viability of the household unit, on securing continued access to the land as the very foundation of peasant autonomy. In line with Chayanov's theorisation, based on the Russian peasantry in the 1920s and 1930s, the nature of this economic calculus of peasant households distinguishes them from conventional capitalist enterprises whose strategies are based on profit maximisation and accumulation (Bernstein, 2009: 59). However, rather than the 'motivation' of the peasant economy being to meet the needs of simple reproduction while 'minimising the drudgery of labour' (Chayanov, 1966 - cited in Bernstein, 2009: 59) in general, I will argue that it is a very specific form of labour which contemporary peasant struggles for autonomy attempt to minimise; off-farm wage labour.

Aside from functioning as a buffer from the market, the exercise of autonomy of decision making over the production process is in itself highly valued by peasant producers. Control over the labour process associated with both subsistence and commodity production contrasts with the oppressive labour conditions experienced by most of CIOAC and FENOCIN's smallholders as seasonal agricultural labourers especially. Desire for autonomous control of the labour process drives struggles to minimise engagement from an oppressive, insecure labour market, or withdraw from it altogether if possible. Senior members of both organisations, many of which are indigenous, experienced even worse conditions as peons on pre-capitalist estates in the not so distant past. They fought for land in terms of control over their own labour no longer to be controlled and dictated by another, and these ideas feed into contemporary struggles for, and interpretations of, autonomy. However, as we will see in the cases of CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers, in the context of growing difficulties facing peasant production and reproduction in the countryside of both countries as a result of the advance of neoliberalism, peasants may be forced to make a trade-off, sacrificing one aspect of autonomy - control of the labour process - with the hope of consolidating another - their access to land.

3.3 Property Relations and Autonomy

Although the struggle for relative autonomy from and within the market characterises the production and reproduction strategies of CIOAC's coffee producers and FENOCIN's cacao growers, it does so in very different institutional contexts. Salinas' 1992 reform of Article 27

of the Mexican constitution formally ended the state's obligation to land distribution. In reality, it had been withdrawing itself from this responsibility for decades, interrupted by sporadic moments of rapid redistribution forced by peasant uprisings such as those of the Yaqui and Mayo valleys of Sonora in 1976, and the Zapatistas in the late 1990s to early 2000s in Chiapas. In the past, rights to social property - an individual plot and access rights to common land - were equal and inseparable, passed from one owner to one family member. Both parcel and communal land rights were protected by the same document. Under the constitutional changes, the right to social agrarian property was fragmented as rights to parcels were made independent from those over common lands. Both are now accredited with distinct certificates and can be transferred separately, effectively ending the right to ejidal social property. The reform established the legal basis for the commodification of land by allowing the use and usufruct of ejidal lands to be transferred to others, provided that this is agreed in the ejidal assembly on the basis of majority decision. Given the consent of the assembly an ejidatario may convert his or her plot (parcela) into private property and sell it without affecting the social property status of the rest of the ejido (Castañeda, 2002: 115-123). These changes imply the possibility for the complete incorporation of formerly social property into a land market. However, despite establishing the legal basis for the subjection of land to capital and a potential market for collectively owned land converted to private property, no significant concentration has taken place. The deep economic crisis of the Mexican countryside since Mexico's entry into NAFTA in 1994 has actually slowed down privatisation as peasants cling to land as a basis of meeting their subsistence needs (Vergara-Camus, 2012: 15), something most feel is far more securely met through continued access to land than through complete dependence on the labour market. In addition to economic crisis, ejidal assemblies still exert a great deal of control over land transfers and this has impeded the generalisation of capitalist social relations in Mexico's countryside. As a result of Mexico's unique and generalised system of ejidal and community land tenure that legal reforms have been unable to transform, CIOAC's peasants are generally more protected from forces of dispossession and class differentiation than those of FENOCIN. As a result of non-capitalist landed property relations, they have a greater space, or 'room for manoeuvre', within which to exercise autonomy than their Ecuadorian counterparts without the risk of losing their land. They are able to significantly withdraw from cash crop production in bad years when the market drops, shifting household labour to subsistence and off-farm wage work, while retaining access to common land, usually pasture and forest. This is not the case on Ecuador's coast,

where land is a commodity, private property that can be bought and sold on the market without the conditions and restrictions in place in Mexico. FENOCIN's coastal peasants are more exposed to forces of dispossession, especially when cacao prices crash, surrounded as they are by highly capitalised banana plantations looking to expand their operations. As detailed in chapter one, their lands have been held in the form of individual private property following the dismantling of the land reform cooperatives they struggled to create, but could not make viable as the state did not fulfil its promises to provide support for their initial years of operation. FENOCIN and CIOAC's producers are, in many cases, dependent on usurious credit arrangements from local intermediaries to finance production. However, in Mexico forced dispossession to repay loans is far less likely than in Ecuador (theoretically possible in the case of money lent between ejidatarios) and other forms of credit repayment (such as negotiated quantity of next harvest, non-monetary exchanges, later repayments, or extra-economic coercion) are typically used without threatening access to land.

The following section will give a brief overview of the international and national dynamics that have shaped the coffee and cacao sectors in Mexico and Ecuador respectively as a necessary historical backdrop for contextualising the autonomous struggles of CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao producers. This will be followed by an examination of how different groups of peasants within CIOAC and FENOCIN struggle to gain some degree of autonomy both *from* and *within* markets, and how they have exercised their (relative) control over the labour process in specific historical contexts to shift dependence between cash crop cultivation, subsistence production, and wage work. These shifting patterns of dependence are ultimately driven by the overarching aim of securing ongoing access to land in order to secure the subsistence requirements of the household.

3.4 Historical Dynamics of the Coffee and Cacao Sectors in Mexico and Ecuador

During the developmentalist era (1940s to late 1970s) the world coffee and cacao sectors were regulated and relatively stable compared to the current neoliberal model, divided as they were according to imperial trade dynamics. However, the expanding global production and consumption of coffee and cacao in the decades following the Second World War led in most cases to the establishment of bilateral alliances between producer and consumer

nations (Losch, 2002: 208). These alliances became formally institutionalised through the 1962 International Coffee Agreement and the 1972 International Cacao Agreement. Both aimed to balance international supply and demand through the application of quota systems whereby supplies of coffee and cacao in excess of consumer requirements were withheld from the market. Supply in producer countries was coordinated by centralised public systems geared towards ensuring production kept in line with national quota requirements.

INMECAFE (*Instituto Mexicano de Café*) was a state run coffee enterprise created in 1958 as a means of improving the productive and marketing capacity of small and medium size coffee producers in the context of increasing world prices for the commodity and the Mexican state's goal of increasing coffee production to generate foreign exchange for industrialisation. The institute's basic objectives were to provide technical assistance to producers, stabilise prices nationally, improve varieties, and control crop diseases (Jiménez & Hernandez-Diaz, 1998: 15). From 1962 the Institute administered Mexico's production quota under the International Coffee Agreement. In Ecuador the Ministry of Agriculture, similarly to INMECAFE in Mexico, took charge of the administration of the nation's cacao supply as a means to earn foreign exchange to fuel industrialisation following the 1964 and 1972 agrarian reforms. Cacao production increased from 37,494 metric tonnes in 1964 to over 50,000 by the end of the decade (Arosemena, 1991: 519). In 1977, the Ministry formed the National Cacao Programme (PNCC - *Programa Nacional de Cacao*) with the aim of further improving productivity and quality through the uptake of new technology, rehabilitation of plots, improved methods and the use of technology (Soria, 1986: 6). Cacao production in Ecuador, like that of coffee in Mexico, is dominated by small producers. Since the collapse of the cacao boom years at the beginning of the 20th Century and the abandonment of large-scale cacao plantations, cacao production in Ecuador's coastal plain has been dominated by peasant smallholders. Today there are around 100,000 cacao production units nationally in Ecuador, the majority of which (58 percent) measure less than ten hectares (Cepeda et al, 2013: 21). Mexico's 2006 coffee census reported that 84.2 percent of a national total of approximately 487,000 coffee production units were of two hectares or less, covering 47.2 percent of the land area under coffee production. As such, coffee production in Mexico, like that of cacao in Ecuador, is predominantly carried out by peasant smallholders (Berlanga, 2011: 29).

Until the early 1970s INMECAFE's impact on coffee growing smallholders was limited; it was underfunded and competing with other government agencies for state resources and against opposition to state intervention in the sector from a coffee oligarchy in south eastern Mexico. This situation changed in the period 1971-1976 as world coffee prices rose dramatically as a result of frosts and crop disease in Brazil. This coincided with the presidential administration of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) that was implementing an aggressive agrarian policy focusing on small peasants and indigenous producers as part of a strategy intended to restore state legitimacy following years of social unrest (Hamilton, 2011: 96). By the early 1970s INMECAFE had still not dealt with the basic problem of small producer dependence on credit from local caciques and intermediaries, and their constant indebtedness binding them to their usurious creditors and to persistent poverty. With these local dependence relations still pervasive in the sector much of INMECAFE's policy on prices was ineffective as local bosses controlled the collection and selling of indebted producer's coffee to the institute. In 1970, to tackle this problem, INMECAFE began a rapid phase of expansion; between the 1970/1971 and 1972/1973 harvests its direct purchases from producers quadrupled from 265,536 quintals¹² to almost one million quintals. By the 1974/1975 harvest a record 36.8 percent of the national harvest was bought by the institute which had become a serious competitor to the private sector (Downing, 1988: 185-187).

However, the end of the Echeverría administration in 1976 also marked the beginning of the end for INMECAFE. The period of high coffee prices that had both triggered and financed INMECAFE's expansion - and also dampened class conflicts within the sector - came to an end. As prices fell INMECAFE's collection and marketing functions were scaled back to the detriment of more marginal producers in particular. Credit available to coffee producers became more scarce and national agrarian policy focus began to shift towards an emphasis on productive goals, i.e. more market efficient producers (Downing, 1988: 188-189). By 1989 INMECAFE had been completely dismantled with the total elimination of productive supports, price controls and government managed marketing channels that had come to serve over 200,000 small coffee producers (Snyder, 1999: 184). Throughout the 1980s INMECAFE's functions were progressively scaled back until it eventually became simply another buyer in the market competing with the private sector for producers' coffee and without the credit and extension services that it had previously provided. The final nail in the institute's coffin was the termination of the International Coffee Accord in 1989 that

¹² one quintal is just over 46 kilograms

had maintained the international system of export quotas to stabilise international prices. In 1990 prices fell 50 percent from the previous year. In 1989 Mexico was in economic crisis as a result of falling oil prices and an increasing rate of foreign debt interest repayments. This led the PRI government to cut back and eliminate traditional corporatist institutions as the country underwent neoliberal structural reform (Jiménez & Hernandez-Diaz, 1998: 18-19).

In Ecuador, the Ministry of Agriculture and the PNCC had never had anything like the coverage or the impact of INMECAFE in Mexico. The overwhelming majority of cacao farmers had very little access to even the most rudimentary services and were forced to sell individually through local intermediaries that typically paid farmers less than the market price of their products. PNCC's target group were producers with between 5 and 50 hectares. Following the de facto generalisation of individual private property relations in the wake of the Ecuadorian state's failure to support producer cooperatives created through land reform, Ecuador's National Development Bank loans were effectively inaccessible to an emerging class of independent cacao producing smallholders simply because most lacked legal land titles (Soria, 1986: 6). As such, they were largely dependent on usurious credit from either local intermediaries or through kinship ties to local political and economic elites. The cacao boom years of 1977 and 1979 were followed by a price crash in 1980 that the International Cacao Agreement could do little to prevent or ameliorate (Losch, 2002: 211). Following the crash the agreement was effectively terminated in 1980 when international price controls, quotas and buffer stocks were eliminated. This effectively ended international supply management for the crop and precipitated the Ecuadorian state's abandonment of its already extremely limited interventions in the sector.

In Mexico in the late 1970s and early 1980s thousands of small coffee farmers had already begun to organise autonomously, forming cooperatives aimed at opening new marketing channels free from the control of both INMECAFE and the agro-industrial elite. By this time INMECAFE was already in decline, scaling back its operations and areas of influence and subject to growing criticism from producers of corruption, cooptation of institute officials by private elites, delays and non-delivery of credits, and that it had become simply the biggest intermediary in the market despite its original intention of ending producer dependence on intermediaries (Snyder, 2001: 35). Nationally, in both Mexico and Ecuador, neoliberal restructuring from the 1980s onwards saw the state withdraw from the peasant

sector and increase support for agro-export production financed by transnational capital. Peasant agriculture was seen as an obstacle to productivity and development and as having no place in the modernising projects of both states. It is within this context that alternative forms of production and marketing - organic and fair trade - emerged as a response to market liberalisation and the generalised crisis of the peasant economy that has accompanied neoliberal restructuring. It was to these market alternatives that organised peasant coffee and cacao producers in Mexico and Ecuador increasingly turned following the withdrawal of state support and market liberalisation.

3.5 The Struggle for Autonomy of CIOAC's Coffee Growers

When CIOAC first began organising workers on coffee estates in Northern Chiapas in the late 1970s the labour force was controlled by landowners in several ways. Under the 'enganche', or advanced payments system, contractors would offer workers a small monetary sum or alcohol to establish a debt. The terms of the debt would be manipulated and workers would become permanently indebted and obliged to work for the patron in exchange for a small plot of land (Lynn, 2002: 97). Although indebted estate workers were paid a minimal, symbolic wage, this was typically recouped by landlords in the estates' own 'tiendas de raya', or basic goods stores which sold simple consumption goods and alcohol at inflated prices.

CIOAC's initial struggles were based on overthrowing the exploitative labour conditions on these coffee estates which, they argued, should be expropriated and handed over to indebted labourers to be managed as workers' cooperatives. The struggle was based primarily on workers' collective control over the labour process under the rallying call of 'land for those who work it', rather than on redistribution of estates into individually held peasant plots. The form these struggles took were examined in more detail in the previous chapter, but the point here is to highlight the internal contradiction within CIOAC that existed at the time between two very different conceptions of peasant economic autonomy emanating on the one hand from the organisation's national leadership, and on the other from the estate workers themselves. The national leadership, many of whom were also leading figures in the Mexican Communist Party at the time, wished to simply place coffee estates under worker control, therefore breaking the social relations of production based on debt bondage and relations of patronage and exploitation between landlords and

workers. It was assumed that production itself would remain largely unchanged; peasants would collectively work the coffee estate as they had done before, only now with their own control over the labour process, free from landlord exploitation. They would still maintain their subsistence plots and the productive matrix of the estate would remain similar in form to the pre-expropriation era. However, once the land had been expropriated, the plans set out by CIOAC confronted the contradictory desires of the workers whose own conceptions of autonomy differed from those of their leaders. Rather than collectively managing coffee production, workers on every one of CIOAC's expropriated estates decided to divide the land into individualised plots to be controlled and managed at the level of the household. This was a shock to CIOAC's leaders who feared the consequences of this policy. Their worries centred on the potential loss of both organisational unity and of economies of scale, the initiation of a process of land fragmentation, and ultimately the potential threat that this represented to the organisation's overarching goal of achieving socialism. While CIOAC conceived of autonomy as a collective concept, with peasants able to organise themselves and operate production units as a group, the members themselves valued individual (household) autonomy regarding land and production decisions over collective control. In their eyes, collective land access would still limit their autonomy in terms of control over the labour process, which would be determined at the organisational rather than the household level. This desire for individual control over land, and production decisions on it, is fundamental for understanding how peasants strive for and exercise autonomy. The land itself is the basis on which autonomy rests, and control over family labour, on and off it, the means by which it is exercised. In the case of Chiapas this desire originates in the experiences of oppressive labour conditions and dependency relations on estates. However, this desire, and the production and reproduction strategies used to retain it, has since been shaped by the need for CIOAC's coffee growers, now with access to their own land, to reproduce themselves subsumed as they are by the capitalist mode of production.

Despite being integrated into the capitalist mode of production, I will argue that the production and reproduction strategies of CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao producers remain fundamentally non-capitalist in nature. This contrasts with Bernstein's (2001) argument that small-scale, or household production in capitalism should be categorised as 'petty commodity production'. According to this conception, the modern 'peasantry' is unable to reproduce itself outside the relations and processes of capitalist commodity production and 'agents of this form of production are capitalists and workers at

the same time because they own or have access to means of production and employ their own labour' (Ibid, 29). However, I will contest this argument on three main levels to demonstrate the non-capitalist logic that underlies the production and reproduction strategies of both organisations' members. Firstly, despite cash crop (commodity) production, they are not completely dependent on this form production for their reproduction requirements. As we will see, they are periodically able to reproduce themselves outside the relations and processes of commodity production as a result of the spaces of relative autonomy from the market that they constantly carve out and occupy. This allows them to shift dependence between commodity production, subsistence cultivation and wage labour. Secondly, they are not 'capitalists'; they produce commodities not for profit maximisation and accumulation but predominantly in order to earn money to buy the things they cannot produce themselves; the sale of coffee and cacao is not oriented towards capital accumulation but simply towards acquiring a monetary income necessary to meet family needs. Unlike a capitalist enterprise, these peasant households do not reinvest 'profits' in order to expand commodity production, but rather use the money income that their production generates to ensure household subsistence requirements are met and that their space of relative autonomy from the market is maintained. Thirdly, to class the modern peasantry as 'workers' on their own land misrepresents the nature of peasant labour, how it is employed, and how it fundamentally differs from wage labour. While it is obvious in analytical terms that peasants are not workers doubly free (from the means of production and to sell their labour power), in practical terms the implications are less so; they do not work for the requirements of capital, but instead on the basis of retaining relative autonomy not just from commodity markets but also the external labour market, and this significantly shapes the way that CIOAC and FENOCIN's (landed) peasants engage with and conceive of wage labour and work on their own land.

As highlighted above the non-capitalist nature of peasant production and reproduction, despite their various forms and degrees of integration into commodity and labour markets, means that they have a certain 'room for manoeuvre' in terms of production decisions that capitalist producers simply do not have. This relative autonomy from the market and the non-capitalist basis of peasant household production strategies drives a logic of production in which avoidance of failure that could ruin them or lead to dispossession/expulsion from the land takes precedence over profit maximisation. This involves constructing a space of relative autonomy from complete dependence on either commodity or labour markets which, given the inherently volatile and low paying nature of the former, and increasingly

precarious, oppressive and poorly paid conditions in the latter, could lead to eventual ruin and dispossession from, or abandonment of, the land. Examining just how this logic has driven CIOAC's coffee growers since they became independent producers will shed more light on the importance of autonomy to them, and the ways in which it shapes their production and reproduction strategies, as well as the nature of their ongoing struggles.

The exercise of, and struggles for, relative autonomy from the market by CIOAC's coffee producers in Chiapas have been shaped by experiences as indentured workers on semi-feudal estates, and subsequently by various degrees of integration into capitalist markets (commodity and labour). The production strategies of coffee growing members of CIOAC in the Sierra Mazateca of Northern Oaxaca are also conditioned by a similar logic of seeking relative autonomy from commodity and labour markets. However, their very different history of land access, state intervention in coffee production and distribution, and labour market participation mean that how this principle is put into practice has varied significantly between the two regions.

In the Sierra Mazateca, large foreign owned coffee haciendas first introduced the crop to the region under the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz in the late 19th Century. However, hacienda production did not dominate the landscape to the extent that it had done in Chiapas, even though at least two foreign owned plantations employed over one thousand workers each, with workers paid in the estates' own currencies which, of course, could only be used to buy necessities on those same estates (Feinberg, 2003). Following the Mexican Revolution these haciendas were dismantled and converted or integrated into ejidos and communities. The members of these communities began cultivating coffee on their own plots which had previously been dedicated to subsistence milpa production (diversified production of predominantly intercropped corn, beans and squash, with surpluses sold on local markets). The process of expansion and deepening of capitalist social relations in Mexico as a whole, and in the agrarian sector in particular, throughout the early 20th Century meant that the Sierra's peasants were forced to integrate into capitalist markets in order to meet their own reproduction requirements, requirements that subsistence production alone was increasingly unable to meet.

Under the Porfiriato (1876-1910) Oaxaca received major foreign capital investment, becoming the fifth most important state of the republic in terms of US capital received (Chassen-Lopez, 1989: 170). Much of this capital was invested in infrastructure, namely railroads, that connected the city of Oaxaca with Mexico City in 1892 as well as smaller lines

connecting Oaxaca's emerging mining and capitalist agricultural regions (Ibid: 171). The state underwent a mining boom from 1892 to 1911 as well as the development of capitalist agriculture which significantly modified tenure arrangements. Either through buying up indigenous communal lands or simply forced dispossession, commercial plantations, especially coffee and tobacco, were established (Ibid: 172). As the indigenous population was increasingly forced from the land it was incorporated into diverse labour arrangements on mines and plantations that varied from debt-bondage to 'free' wage labour. Integration of the sierra's peasants took the form of either coffee production on ever fragmenting small plots as land access became ever more restricted by mining and capitalist agriculture, and/or increasingly off-farm wage labour in mines or on plantations. The 1910-1917 revolution did not reverse the tendency towards increasing dependence on commodity production; it consolidated it. Ejidos were created on the edge of haciendas, near villages, so that workers could continue to work for landlords and supplement their wages/survive through access to their own land when labour was not needed on the hacienda. The development of the capitalist sector fostered by the Mexican state since the revolution, including under the Cardenas administration (1934-1940), inevitably assisted the erosion and destruction of the non-capitalist peasant economy (Ibid: 34) and its insertion - as labourers and commodity producers - into the capitalist system. However, the nature and form of this peasant market integration in the Sierra, as with CIOAC's producers in Chiapas, is based not entirely on imperatives imposed by the market, but instead on retaining (or in some cases expanding) land access and the relative autonomy from the market that this confers. CIOAC's coffee growers can no longer reproduce themselves without integration into both commodity and labour markets. However, market imperatives do not drive their production strategies as they would for fully capitalist enterprises. These strategies are instead driven by a logic of seeking to exercise and expand relative autonomy from the market rather than being driven and totally conditioned by market imperatives. They may be market oriented, but they are not commodity market dependent.

In both Chiapas and Oaxaca, CIOAC's peasants faced the growing need to commoditise household production in isolated regions where market access for selling coffee depended on relatively wealthier peasant intermediaries, normally politically connected and part of historically established 'cacicazgos' - local and regional political networks controlled hierarchically by politically connected strongmen. Employment sources in these regions were scarce and so if wage labour was to form a component of household reproduction strategies then it would have to be out of the municipality, in Mexico's urban centres, in

expanding mining or agro-export sectors, especially in the North of the country, or increasingly abroad, predominantly the United States. The logic behind cash crop production, however, has remained strongly rooted in retaining relative autonomy from the market and both coffee production and wage labour tend to revolve around continuing to ensure the viability of the household's land in meeting household subsistence needs year on year rather than on short-term concerns with maximising incomes or profits. If peasants' decisions regarding cash crop production or wage employment are considered independently, without taking into account peasant desires for (relative) autonomy from the market (both as securing continuing access to land and control over the labour process that this confers), then they may appear 'irrational' both in terms of capitalist efficiency and labour struggles, for example manifesting themselves as lack of interest in both profit maximisation and labour organising (Bartra, 1982: 27). Off farm labour for CIOAC peasants in Chiapas and Oaxaca is typically not valued and income generated from it tends to be used to maintain the household's land, especially the viability of subsistence production. It may also be used to lease additional land from within the community/ejido in order to support growing families and reduce the need to seek employment elsewhere. Wage income supports the family production unit and subsistence cultivation even when, in purely economic terms, it would often be better spent buying staple foodstuffs on the market and abandoning subsistence production altogether. However, such decisions are better understood by analysing such behaviour through the lens of peasant autonomy; seeking to secure the long term viability of their production units as a buffer against volatile primary commodity markets and insecure conditions of increasingly scarce wage employment in the labour market, both of which could critically impact their ability to buy their own means of subsistence. Subsidising the family plot in this way increases autonomy from the market necessary for the household's long term survival.

In both Chiapas and Oaxaca one of the main aspects of struggle for CIOAC has been trying to escape from dependence on intermediaries for the commercialising of members' coffee. The majority of peasants have experience, both past and present, of selling their coffee in the form of patio dried beans to local intermediaries in their municipalities' urban centres from which they receive credit in return for a promised volume of coffee at the next harvest. According to CIOAC producers in both states not only are these credit arrangements extremely unfair, demanding an overly high volume of coffee for the credit given, but the intermediaries also trick producers in the weighing of the coffee. Their scales are said to be biased while excuses are always given for discounting prices paid, for

example for beans containing too much humidity, being diseased, or of poor quality. Both the Mexican state and CIOAC have attempted to tackle the problem of intermediation at various times and in various ways, the former especially in the 1970s through the creation of INMECAFE and more recently through the promotion of direct export company-producer relations. CIOAC, in turn, has experimented with regional cooperatives that have sought to provide alternative marketing channels for their members. How CIOAC's members have interpreted and engaged with these initiatives corroborates the argument presented above that their central objective is to retain a level of autonomy from the market in which cash crop failure would not result in jeopardising household subsistence and the absolute dependence on off-farm wage labour for survival. Subsistence production has continued on all holdings in all the communities in which fieldwork was conducted in both Chiapas and Oaxaca despite the fact that full conversion to cash crop production would have yielded far higher financial returns for the majority of these producers for most of this time if analysed from the perspective of a capitalist logic of profit driven production. The specific nature of CIOAC members' experiences with the state coffee company and producer cooperatives differs significantly between both states and will be examined separately in order to show that a logic of relative autonomy from the market holds in both cases. It is driven by the same fundamental objective of retaining a degree of autonomy, conditioned by household subsistence requirements, from the dangerous, potentially immiserating forces of the market.

As capitalist social relations deepened and expanded in both the Sierra Mazateca and nationally, so too did peasant integration into commodity and labour markets. In this context, the region's peasants turned to coffee production to provide monetary incomes. This necessarily entailed an increasing level of conversion from subsistence to cash crop (coffee) production. By the 1970s the proportion of land under subsistence and coffee cultivation on peasant holdings now belonging to CIOAC members had gradually increased to an average of 50 percent for both. In this same period, CIOAC's indentured workers in Chiapas benefitted from the expropriation of the semi-feudal coffee estates on which they worked. Once the land had been distributed among CIOAC's members into individualised family holdings, the same average land area dedicated to subsistence and coffee production became the norm, once again 50 percent for each (figures based on interviews with coffee growers in the Sierra Mazateca, Oaxaca, and Jitotol, Chiapas). Fragmentation of holdings has intensified from the 1970s onwards as the state first reduced and later ended its commitment to land redistribution. Despite average land area per household falling with

each generation, this proportion has held with family members unable to be supported by the family production unit's subsistence and coffee production being forced to leave their land and enter labour markets in order to survive. Complete commodification of production has been universally resisted despite long periods of favourable market conditions that, to a capitalist producer, would provide incentive to place all land under cash crop production. This ties into the previous point that peasants value a minimal self-provisioning capacity that can provide for household subsistence requirements in the event of cash-crop failure or complete loss of wage employment for the household. Only in one very specific circumstance since the 1970s have some of CIOAC's coffee growers decided to expand commodity production, therefore heightening their market integration, at the expense of subsistence production, but without ever giving up subsistence production altogether. This involved CIOAC's members in the Sierra Mazateca and their relationship with INMECAFE.

While CIOAC's producers in the Sierra Mazateca were heavily influenced by the Institute, especially in the early to mid-1970s, INMECAFE's programmes never reached any of CIOAC's producers in Chiapas. A combination of geographical isolation and historical landlord political control of the state and its indigenous peasantry meant that the institute never entered much of Chiapas' territory. The only impact it had for a minority of these producers was as a competitive pressure on intermediaries through acting as it did simply as another competing buyer in the marketplace. For coffee growers in the Sierra Mazateca in the mid-1970s, a sharp increase in world prices combined with production subsidies from INMECAFE which also guaranteed to buy their coffee for a predetermined price above that offered by local intermediaries and without the latter's manipulation of scales, quality standards and credit terms. Under such conditions, many peasants decided to expand land area under coffee production at the expense of subsistence area.

'During this epoch the producers in my municipality had three to four hectares of coffee (of an average of five hectares total land area per household in the 1970s according to interviewee); now the average is one and a half (of an average of three hectares total land area per household currently). Andrés Graciada, CIOAC member and Community Delegate of San Mateo Yoloxochitlan, (29 November 2012, Huautla de Jiménez, Oaxaca).

'Now the producers have an average of one to one and a half hectares. During INMECAFE they had three to four. (Interviewer) What did they do with the coffee fields? They were converted to planting corn, just for subsistence. Felipe Palacios Chazares, Leader of the 'Organización de Cafecultores del Eloxochitlan de Flores Magon', part of CIOAC (5 December 2012, City of Oaxaca).

The above accounts regarding land areas under coffee and subsistence production given by CIOAC members in the Sierra Mazateca are confirmed by a local CNC leader also from region:

'The majority here have two to three hectares (of coffee). During INMECAFE they had four to five. The people converted their coffee fields to plant corn and beans'. **Gerardo Herrera García, Leader of the CNC organisation 'Paz y Libertad' (1 December 2012, municipality of San José Tenango, La Cañada, Oaxaca).**

That Oaxaca's producers opted for increased market integration at the expense of subsistence production, with subsistence requirements met increasingly through purchases on the market with income earned from coffee cultivation, does not violate the argument that producers on the basis of retaining a degree of autonomy from the market. Firstly, INMECAFE provided producers with a stable, reliable market for their coffee in an international context in which national production volumes and world prices were set by the International Coffee Organisation (ICO). The prices INMECAFE paid to producers were tied to the ICO set prices. By expanding its operations into the Sierra Mazateca the Institute could offer CIOAC's producers better prices than those offered by exploitative intermediaries. However, more importantly than better prices in themselves was the fact that these prices were tied to the ICO and that the Institute was keen to dominate the Mexican coffee market and so promised to buy all the coffee that growers could produce. INMECAFE's strategy must be understood within the context of the Echeverría administration's need to revive its deteriorating legitimacy. It attempted this through a neopopulist programme of political and social reforms to forge a populist coalition with the peasantry and other marginalised and disillusioned sectors (Morton, 2011: 113). The institute's strategy conferred a high degree of certainty to producers that conversion of subsistence to coffee production would bring stable higher incomes at very little risk. It should be stressed however that such conversion was not driven by a capitalist logic of profit maximisation. Instead, it was carried out primarily in order to consolidate the viability of peasants' land as a source of livelihood and as a means of exercising autonomy, i.e. employing household labour on their own land as opposed to being forced to sell that labour, losing control over it, via the alienating experiences of labour markets. As mentioned earlier but important to keep in mind during the course of this chapter, the social property relations of ejido and community production in Mexico offers relative protection for coffee producers from direct threats of dispossession in the event of crop failure, credit repayment difficulties etc. in a way that Ecuador's cacao producers,

occupying land on the basis of private property, do not enjoy. Despite land access (the basis of peasant autonomy) not being considerably threatened if CIOAC's members become completely dependent on the commodity market, control of the labour process (the exercise of peasant autonomy) is; difficulties in commodity production and/or markets will likely result in the need to integrate further into labour markets, even more so if commodity market dependence increases at the expense of subsistence capacity.

Before INMECAFE's arrival, dependence on intermediaries and the exploitative terms of trade producers were forced to accept represented a major threat to peasants' capacity to reproduce themselves on the land and therefore a significant immiserating force. INMECAFE's arrival significantly reduced this problem and through working with the Institute peasants could actually consolidate their families' livelihoods on the land and, importantly in terms of the second issue highlighted above, decrease household dependence on labour markets for survival, a major aspect of peasants' struggles for relative autonomy from the market. From the perspective of CIOAC's producers, household reproduction and the wellbeing of its members could be better guaranteed by increasing both land area and family labour dedicated to coffee production. This reduced dependence on typically oppressive and insecure wage labour and minimised subsistence production to a level that could at least provide for short-term household survival in the event of cash crop failure or other environmental risks inherent to agricultural production. During the INMECAFE era all of the CIOAC members interviewed stated that they had maintained the subsistence plot at such a level of production and supplemented household consumption needs with purchases from income generated mainly from coffee sales, but also wage labour, dependence on which was reduced but certainly not eliminated through working with the Institute.

'We all had coffee (in the INMECAFE era), but we still kept the milpa as well...We received our money in cash, it was more direct. Everything was more stable. Afterwards everything went to ruin. Many people migrated, left their coffee plots. They went to Puebla, Tehuacán, Mexico City.' **Felipe Palacios Chazares (5 December 2012).**

By the end of the 1970s, INMECAFE was being scaled back as both the state and a number of social organisations, including CIOAC, turned against the institute for very different reasons. The former needed to shed itself of corporatist institutions ideologically and financially as it underwent neoliberal restructuring in the context of the debt crisis. Independent organisations demanded that control over the running of the sector be their responsibility under a participatory democratic governance structure in which producer

interests were truly represented, free from the paternalistic control of the state. With both the state from above and social organisations from below uniting in their calls for the dismantling of INMECAFE (if not in their reasons why, or in how the sector should be governed), Snyder (1999) argues that the institute's termination was politically relatively simple. Its formal cessation in 1991 as part of Salinas' sweeping neoliberal reforms, coupled with the collapse of the ICO quota system in 1989, pitted producer associations against coffee oligarchs in a struggles for control of the productive chain, to access international markets, and to influence and fill the institutional void left following state withdrawal. The largest and best organised groups within the independent producer movement were able to take control of some of the institute's former infrastructure following its demise. They saw the new context as an opportunity to move small producers closer to international markets as well as strengthening their capacity to seek out emerging ethically and environmentally driven markets that could offer better prices for their coffee. However, the oligarchs, consisting of national and international processing and export firms, saw the exit of what was for them a major competitor as an opportunity to force smallholders to sell to them at much lower prices than before, especially now that the market distorting export quotas of the ICO had disappeared in a market prone to oversupply (Snyder, 2001: 21).

Production under INMECAFE was sustained with green revolution inputs so when the institute was abolished producers were left in an especially difficult situation; having increased their market dependence for basic goods, price crash in the coffee market and dependence on chemical inputs (FERTIMEX, the state owned fertiliser company that made and provided subsidised chemical inputs to the peasant sector, was also privatised as part of Salinas' neoliberal project in 1992) meant that the latter had to be bought without state subsidies or the soil would simply not produce. The inability of most producers to afford now unsubsidised chemical inputs was the central initial impetus for the promotion of organic production in the emerging independent coffee organisations of the 1980s (not growing environmental concerns as is often assumed, but which now constitute an important organising principle of cooperative producers). As indicated in the interviews with producers in the Sierra Mazateca, the Institute's termination led to reconversion of coffee cultivation back to subsistence production and increasing dependence on wage labour in household reproduction strategies as well as a return to intermediary dependence for the sale of coffee. In many coffee growing regions it was this situation which spurred the emergence of independent producer organisations aiming to eliminate intermediation, this time independently rather than via the state. The emergence of autonomous producer

organisations and the nature of their struggles following state withdrawal will be examined for both Mexico and Ecuador after looking at how the logic of relative autonomy from the market also drives the production and reproduction strategies of FENOCIN's cacao producers.

3.6 The Struggle for Autonomy of FENOCIN's Cacao Producers

FENOCIN's coastal peasants typically farm a smallholding of four to six hectares, planted overwhelmingly with cacao, some subsistence crops, and the rest uncultivated due to lack of resources (Striffler 2002: 141). 94.5 percent of Ecuador's agricultural land area is owned on the basis of private property (SIPAE, 2011: 9) and all of FENOCIN's cacao producers occupy their land on this basis. In contrast, a 'small' coffee growing peasant in Southeast Mexico owns between a quarter and three hectares of marginal land dedicated to an equal combination of subsistence production and coffee cultivation, and has access to communal pastures/forestry resources. As we saw above, CIOAC's coffee growers produce under ejido or community forms of social property relations. Both organisations' members depend to a significant but varying degree on income derived from off-farm wage labour that varies between households.

FENOCIN's coastal peasants, like those of CIOAC in Chiapas, gained access to land through the breakup of pre-capitalist haciendas and capitalist banana plantations as a result largely of their own struggles. Similarly to Chiapas, the state's role was decisive in redistribution but minimal thereafter, playing a major role in altering production relations on Ecuador's coast through the establishment of producer cooperatives, support for which was insufficient from the outset and increasingly withdrawn in the few years following redistribution. Initially IERAC was intent on continuing the collective work methods employed on banana plantations, much like CIOAC's leaders had hoped for when coffee estates were redistributed to workers. It developed productive and credit plans with ex-plantation workers that would permit repayment of state loans to expropriated landlords. The banana plantations would be run collectively with each member typically receiving between one and two hectares to produce household food crops on an individual/household basis. However, in the cases of UROCAL and UNOCAR, IERAC's underfunding following initial redistribution meant that peasants were unable to put all cooperative land under production, a necessary component of the productive plan

designed for servicing debt repayments. The illegal sale of cooperative lands ensued, encouraged by peasant poverty, indebtedness, and the eagerness of local capitalists to purchase high quality lands. IERAC did nothing to prevent these sales. Once communal lands were sold off the cooperatives ceased to exist in any meaningful sense and remaining members began obtaining legal titles for the lands they had been individually holding (as 'informal' private property) for years (Striffler, 2002: 132-140). FENOCIN's resource and land poor peasants could no longer continue relatively capital intensive banana production for export markets, yet faced the challenge of reproducing themselves subsumed within, but isolated from, highly capitalised agricultural operations in the region. This reproduction strategy forced peasants to turn to cacao production, continued subsistence cultivation, and varying degrees of dependence on wage labour, a reproduction strategy similar to that shared by CIOAC's coffee growers. However, the nature of this strategy and degree of dependence on each component differs as a result of factors specific to each social formation. These will be discussed and compared in order to demonstrate that the struggle for autonomy is a core component of peasant production and reproduction strategies, although how this autonomy is conceived, and peasant strategies employed to try to achieve it, depend on specific contexts.

Production of Ecuador's native cacao strain (cacao nacional) is relatively low input and climate and pest resistant. Most of FENOCIN's coastal peasants were already cultivating it on a small scale on their individual plots as a supplementary source of income when IERAC first set up cooperatives. However, once the cooperatives began to fail and were eventually broken up, its production became increasingly necessary to provide peasants with the monetary income that bananas could not. Cacao's growing importance for the peasant household economy since the 1970s especially has been accompanied by the growth and increasing dependence on local intermediaries for credit needed for its production and as a buyer in marginalised rural areas. UNOCAR's cacao producers, much like CIOAC's coffee producers, have been forced to depend on credit from these local merchants and usurers to finance their production. Unlike CIOAC's coffee producers who dedicate half of their land area to subsistence (milpa) production, and the other half to coffee, UNOCAR's members typically dedicate their land to commercial crop production (cacao mainly) with subsistence crops - namely plantain and fruit trees - used simultaneously for subsistence and to provide the shade needed by cacao trees. Coastal Ecuador has, since the late 19th Century cacao boom to more recent export banana production, been strongly integrated into the world market. Much of the labour needed to establish and operate cacao plantations over one

hundred years ago was drawn from predominantly subsistence Andean communities. However, the inability to produce Andean subsistence crops on the coastal plain combined with the generalisation of wage labour has meant that peasant market integration has historically been much stronger on Ecuador's coast than in the Andes and coffee producing regions of southeast Mexico. As such, subsistence production for Ecuador's coastal cacao producers has been, and remains, geared towards the shade requirements of cacao plants whose health and productivity is prioritised over subsistence crops. Production for the market and purchases from it to meet consumption needs is the norm. Important also in shaping this dynamic is that land on the coast, in contrast to the Andes and much of Chiapas and Oaxaca in Mexico, does not typically have the social and culturally imbued meanings derived from generations of subsistence production and community ceremonies based on traditional crops that have developed from this. Demand for labour and its availability and stability are also important factors that shape this relative lack of emphasis on subsistence production, examined in more detail below.

As we have seen, the production focus of FENOCIN's coastal peasants today is cacao intercropped with shade producing fruit trees and plantain that provide for a proportion of household subsistence requirements. However, rice is the dietary staple on Ecuador's coast and FENOCIN's cacao producers must buy this with money earned from cacao production and wage employment. Unlike CIOAC's coffee growers who cultivate spatially distinct subsistence and cash crop plots, the symbiotic relationship between cacao (cash) and shade (subsistence) trees means that household labour cannot shift focus from subsistence to cacao production, or vice versa, depending on prevailing conditions in commodity markets in ways that CIOAC's coffee growers can. As such, the exercise of autonomy, rather than shifting between three distinct activities as it does in the case of Mexico; subsistence (milpa) cultivation, coffee production and wage labour, is instead restricted to shifting reliance between subsistence *and* cacao production as a single, symbiotic whole, and wage labour. As a result of this and other factors that will be elaborated below, the struggles for autonomy for these peasants revolve around cacao in a different way to those of CIOAC's coffee producers. For the latter, subsistence production remains the foundation of the peasant household and any decisions regarding coffee are made with ensuring the continuation of subsistence production at the forefront, followed by minimising labour market integration. FENOCIN's cacao producers similarly attempt to minimise their integration into labour markets; however, instead of struggling for relative autonomy *from* commodity markets they are attempting to create and occupy a space of autonomy *within*

it. They are attempting to exercise an element of control within the cacao market by differentiating the country's genetically distinct strain of cacao - produced overwhelmingly by peasants - from commercial varieties with which it is currently mixed by transnational exporters (TNEs). Ecuador's cacao market is dominated by TNEs and the chain of intermediaries they fund, and is characterised by the same features that CIOAC's members complain of with regard to the Mexican coffee market; usurious credit and unfair buying arrangements with local intermediaries and average low prices that are highly volatile. One of FENOCIN's cacao producers describes the extent of this volatility:

'I sell to the intermediary in Quininde...last year the price rose as high as \$120 a quintal, but some years it has fallen to just \$50 or \$60. What's more is that it can fall during the harvest - for example, now the price is \$100 a quintal, but tomorrow it could fall to \$90. It goes like this depending on the world market.

Antonio Espinoza Sánchez, member of AACH (16 April 2014, Chucaple Esmeraldas)

Freedom from dependence on such an unpredictable market is the principal objective for FENOCIN's cacao growers. Like CIOAC's coffee growers, market stability is more highly sought after than any potential situation in which average prices increase but volatility remains. However, whereas CIOAC's coffee producers can fall back on a combination of subsistence and wage labour dependence during periods of low prices, for FENOCIN's members the former is not a viable means of ensuring household survival, leaving recourse only to the latter, which is already a relatively substantial and constant component of household reproduction strategies. As a result, these peasants have placed a strong emphasis on seeking out alternative outlets for their cacao in the form of certification schemes and direct producer-consumer linkages.

Both CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao producers have sought alternative production techniques and marketing channels for their cash crops in the neoliberal era as part of a logic that remains driven by the struggle for autonomy. However, as mentioned above, such struggles - although founded on the basis of seeking relative autonomy from commodity markets - cannot be reduced to this alone; they also involve attempts to exercise a degree of autonomy within commodity markets, defined here as relative control over production and marketing decisions regarding cash crops on the basis of securing long-term household reproduction on the land, rather than on the basis of capital accumulation. The exercise of autonomy in the neoliberal era involves both the relative withdrawal from adverse commodity markets while at the same time struggling to renegotiate and influence the terms upon which commodity market integration is based. The next section will provide

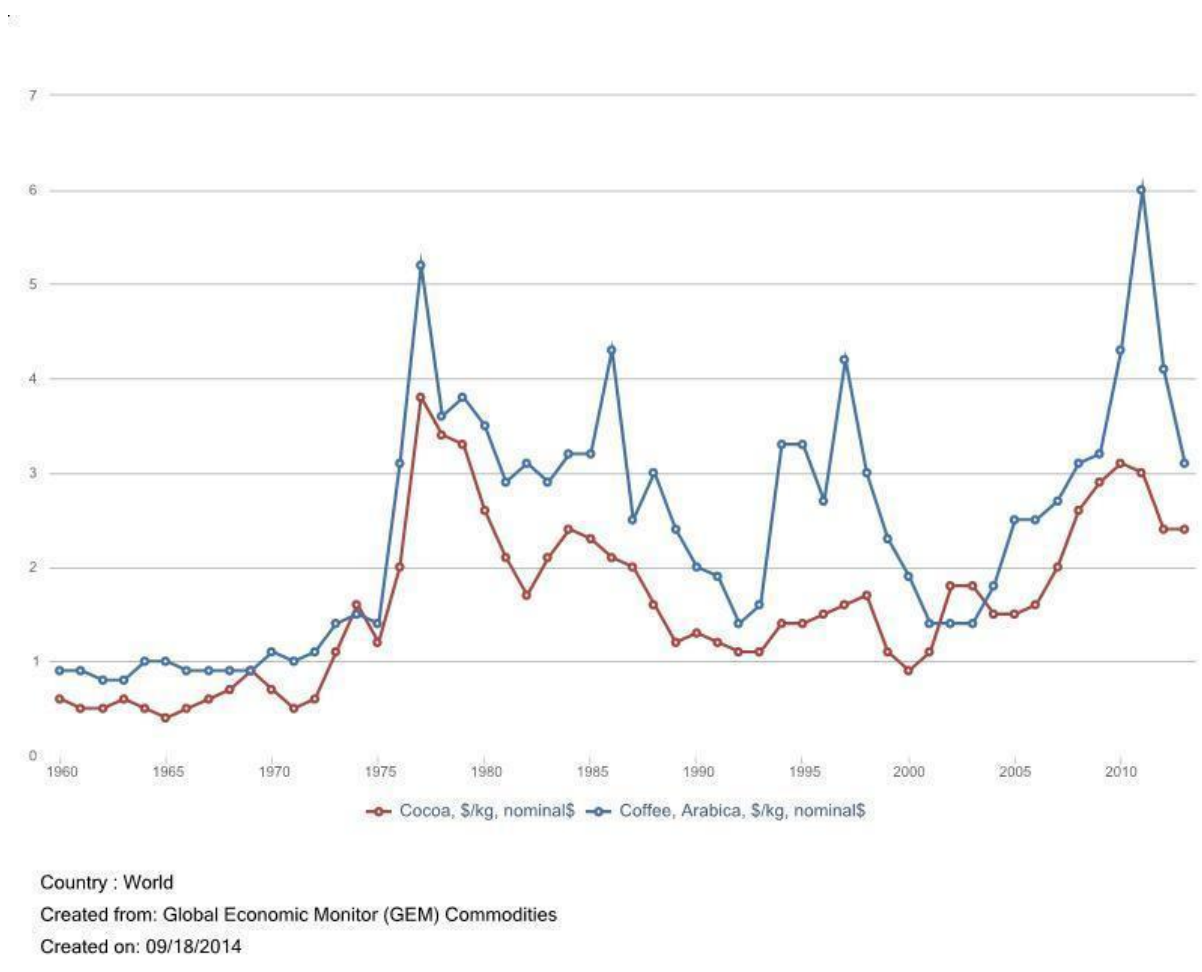
an overview of the emergence of organic and fair trade initiatives and the issues that have surrounded their application and development in order to contextualise the nature and form of both organisations' contemporary struggles for autonomy.

3.7 The Search for Alternatives in the Neoliberal Era

The end of international supply management through international commodity agreements and the accompanied elimination or drastic scaling back of direct state intervention in production and marketing for the peasant sector during neoliberal transition had profound impacts on the peasantry. The disappearance of regulation, falling prices, market volatility, lack of credit and state withdrawal increasingly transferred control of the coffee and cacao sectors in Mexico and Ecuador to the private sector (Renard, 2010: 23) and has reduced the proportion of profit destined to the initial link of the chain - direct producers (Perez-Grovas et al, 2001: 4). In the cases of Mexican coffee and Ecuadorian cacao, as we saw above, these are overwhelmingly peasant smallholders. The termination of international commodity agreements precipitated the dismantling of INMECAFE and the Ecuadorian Ministry of Agriculture's interventionist roles in their national coffee and cacao sectors respectively within the international context of the emergence of neoliberalism as a response to the crisis of accumulation at the end of the 1970s (Harvey, 2005: 14-15). INMECAFE's dismantling was part of more sweeping reforms in Mexico under the Salinas administration and the Ecuadorian state's withdrawal from its already limited role in supporting peasant cacao producers from the mid-1970s onwards was heavily influenced by the debt crisis and SAP implementation. The end of international coffee and cacao supply management and market liberalisation hit producers by reducing prices and increasing price volatility. Withdrawal of various state supports - productive, marketing, credit etc. - increased smallholders' exposure to the negative impacts of liberalisation.

From the mid-1970s onwards coffee and cacao markets have been characterised by massive volatility (see figure 1), a general trend of falling prices (real and nominal) and devastating unpredictability for producers. This, as we will see below in the cases of CIOAC and FENOCIN's smallholders, has had major implications for their struggles for autonomy.

Figure 7. World coffee and cacao prices per kilo in US dollars (nominal) 1960-2013.



(my elaboration, taken from World Bank's 'Global Economic Monitor'
 <<http://data.worldbank.org>>)

As figure one demonstrates, the end of the International Coffee Agreement (coinciding with INMECAFE's termination) in 1989 saw international prices plummet until 1994, when prices spiked once more, and again in 1997, namely as a result of frosts in Brazil. From 1999 to 2004 - the so called 'coffee crisis' - real coffee prices fell to some of their lowest levels in history as a result of massive global oversupply, devastating smallholder coffee communities around the world and bringing with it reductions in income of about 60 percent in areas of Mexico that were already marginalised (Calo & Wise, 2005: 7). Poor harvests in Vietnam and Central America in 2010 led once more to massive price increases as demand outstripped supply.

The cacao price peak of 1977-1979 was followed by a price crash that the International Cacao Organisation could do little to avert or remedy (Losch, 2002: 211) and subsequently (1980) quota controls were eliminated in the context of global market liberalisation. Cacao prices continued to fall until the mid-2000s until 2010 when political instability in the Ivory

Coast, the world's leading cacao producing and exporting nation, reduced its production volume. Concentration in the coffee and cacao commodity chains has also compounded the impact of liberalisation on prices. In Mexico, Ecuador and elsewhere, the retreat of the state created a vacuum into which stepped transnational traders and processors, leading to rapid corporate consolidation following the breakdown of managed markets (Calo & Wise, 2005: 7).

For most of Mexico and Ecuador's coffee and cacao producing smallholders, falling prices and increased volatility, combined with significant or complete state withdrawal from productive support for the peasant sector from the late 1970s onwards, generated production and reproduction crises. The contemporary fair trade movement and various strands of 'ethical' and 'environmentally sustainable' initiatives developed as a response to the neoliberal onslaught as attempts not only to increase and stabilise producer incomes, but also create a more just social and economic system in which human and environmental wellbeing, rather than capital accumulation, would be the guiding principle. A brief overview of the history of these initiatives and the forces that have shaped their development over the course of the neoliberal era is necessary before going on to look specifically at how CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers have engaged with them in their struggles for relative autonomy from and within the market.

In the wake of market deregulation, new coffee and cacao fair trade (FT) and organic production initiatives emerged and developed as market based efforts to engage consumers with the plight of producers, and correct the failure of the market to value the non-market aspects of smallholder production, namely social justice and environmental protection (Calo & Wise, 2005: 8). The FT movement, at its inception, was centred on a fundamental critique of the structural injustice of global trade. It framed itself as an effort to redress social and economic inequalities by linking direct producers in the global South with consumers in the North, bypassing traditional intermediaries (Jaffee & Howard, 2010: 5). During the 1970s and 1980s newly emerging FT organisations came to characterise themselves as alternative trade organisations, social economy actors whose primary goal was to help small producers in developing countries not simply by selling the latter's products in the North, but also by working to change the systemic causes of their problems rooted in the international trade system.

From 1988 the FT movement decided on a strategy of certification in order to expand its market reach that would have major consequences for the social economy aspects of its objectives and its capacity to act as an alternative, rather than an appendage, to the international trade system to which it had initially set up against. The Max Havelaar Foundation, established in 1988 in the Netherlands, is generally recognised as the first Fair Trade labelling organisation (FLO) and was initiated by the coffee cooperative UCIRI (Union of Indigenous Communities in the Region of the Isthmus) in Oaxaca. The founders of Max Havelaar believed that the fair trade market could not be substantially increased if it did not spread beyond alternative outlets to mainstream retail chains. A certifying body was therefore set up with the aim of incorporating major retailers into the FT distribution network and FLOs began to accept corporations as licensees of fair trade products (Reed, 2009: 5). According to Jaffee & Howard (2010: 6-11) the involvement of corporations in the fair trade network has boosted demand but ruled out of bounds the most transformative elements of the movement, namely the urgency of creating truly alternative and socially just trading relations. The regulatory function and social principles upon which FLOs were founded clashed with the economic interest of increasing demand and this has simplified the initiative to a single variable: payment of a minimum price, the level of which is no longer linked to actual family livelihoods.

Much has been written on the minimum price issue and the mainstreaming of fair trade; the incorporation of major retailers into the fair trade distribution network and the move from direct producer-consumer linkages to certification in order to expand FT markets (Reed, 2009); how TNCs involve themselves with FT and organic to 'fairwash' and 'greewash' their products (Johannessen & Whilite, 2010: 540), the proliferation of less stringent company own certifications that compete with producer led FLOs (Renard, 2010: 30) and the falling real value of FT minimum prices as a result of corporate interests co-opting the FT movement (Jaffee & Howard, 2010). A study by Bacon (2010: 130) demonstrates that real prices for FT Arabica coffee prices lost 41 percent of their value between 1988 to 2008, echoing other writers on the topic (Jaffee & Howard, 2010; Taylor et al, 2005; Reed, 2009) in attributing the cause of this fall to the now central role of corporate licensees in selling FT goods and the power of retailers to influence FLO decisions regarding minimum prices based on their own sales and profit requirements as opposed to the best interests of producers that the FT movement initially set out to serve. The purpose of this chapter is not to examine all the factors that have shaped alternative trade networks, but rather how such networks have been engaged with by coffee and cacao

producing smallholders in Mexico and Ecuador in their struggles for autonomy. As such we will restrict our analysis to the specific aspects of organic and FT coffee and cacao initiatives that shape such struggles. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to briefly explain how organic and fair trade markets work in order to better understand the mechanisms by which CIOAC and FENOCIN's cash crop smallholders seek and exercise autonomy both *from* and *within* their respective commodity markets.

Organic coffee and cacao are third party certified and require the use of production methods that promote biodiversity, protect and improve soils, and minimise dependence on inputs. Both are indexed to global market prices and receive premiums above prevailing conventional prices with variations in these premiums based primarily on quality characteristics. Aside from quality, the values of these premiums are also determined by supply and demand in the markets for organic coffee and cacao themselves (Calo & Wise, 2005: 10). Currently, organic Arabica coffee receives a premium of US\$ 0.10 to 0.50/lb above conventional coffee prices. For non-Fair Trade organic certified cacao beans there is no fixed price premium as it is subject to market fluctuations, usually ranging from US\$100 to \$300 per tonne above conventional cacao prices, again depending on quality and origin. Fair Trade certified organic cacao beans receive a fixed price premium of US\$200 per tonne (ICCO, 2006: 5). Organic coffee and cacao are much more labour intensive to produce than their conventional counterparts and because it generally takes two to three years to gain certification and therefore to begin receiving a premium price, the initial labour investments by producers are significant. The other principle cost associated with organic production is the certification process itself, an annual expense to cover inspections that can easily amount to five percent of total sales (Calo & Wise, 2005: 10).

FT coffee and cacao certification does not guarantee that beans can be sold on FT markets as quality remains the key. Rather than market indexed premiums (organic), the FT market offers guaranteed floor prices that are supposed to guarantee a reasonable return to producers. As of 1 April 2011, the floor price for conventional FT arabica coffee is US\$1.35/lb while that for organic is US\$1.65/lb. If market prices rise above these floor prices then these coffees receive a FT premium of US\$0.2/lb. From 1 October 2012 the floor prices of conventional and organic FT cacao have been US\$2,000/tonne and US\$2,300/tonne respectively and both receive a FT premium of US\$200/tonne when market prices rise above these levels (Fair Trade International, 2014). The costs associated with FT coffee and cacao production are far lower than those for certified organics as there

are no additional labour requirements and certification costs are largely borne by the FLO (Calo & Wise, 2005: 12). For CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao producers, the labour requirements of organic production and FT minimum prices are major determinants that shape production and reproduction strategies geared towards seeking relative autonomy both from and within the market.

3.8 Struggles for Autonomy in the Neoliberal Era

In 1992, CIOAC formed UREAFA (*Unión Regional de Ejidatarios Agropecuarios, Forestal y de Agroindustrias de los Pueblos Zoques y Tzotziles de Chiapas*) in Chiapas, an independent ejidal union consisting of 54 families and focused primarily on the production and marketing of coffee. UREAFA's leaders entered into organic and Fair Trade certification schemes during the early 2000s and began selling directly into the United States where demand for ethically produced coffee grew throughout the decade. From the mid-1990s many of FENOCIN's cacao producers have had similar experience with organic cacao production and markets, and one of its member organisations - UROCAL - is currently a FT certified cooperative as well. UROCAL began producing FT, organic certified cacao in 1994 in response to the impoverishing market conditions facing their producers and with the hope of entering more stable markets offering better returns and opportunities for improved production. Despite initial optimism and positive results regarding FT and organic agreements, CIOAC and FENOCIN encountered increasing limitations in the capacity of these markets to confer greater autonomy over production and marketing decisions and, ultimately, shape coffee and cacao markets in their own interests and provide better and more stable incomes than conventional production. Leaders and members argue that these once alternative markets in which they negotiated directly with buyers have now become mainstream, market-mediated, increasingly competitive and quality driven, prone to volatility, and with prices paid to producers that have stagnated over the last decade while production costs have continued to rise. The relative space within the market to exercise a degree of autonomy over production and marketing decisions has been gradually closed to cooperatives as corporate control of certified markets has increased.

As a result of the above, a growing number of CIOAC and FENOCIN's producers have focused their production and reproduction strategies on reducing their exposure to such markets in order to devote more labour to subsistence production (CIOAC) and wage labour

(CIOAC and FENOCIN) i.e. they have increasingly exercised autonomy *from* commodity markets as spaces of autonomy *within* these markets have been gradually reduced or eliminated. Unlike Oaxaca's CIOAC members working with INMECAFE, UREAFA's growers could not rely on certified markets to pay a stable price year on year that could justify some degree of conversion of their subsistence plots to coffee cultivation. This is due to the fact that although FT organic coffee receives a minimum price guarantee and a (typically but certainly not always) higher price per kilo than conventional coffee, the former is so low given the extra effort (labour time) required to produce certified coffee and the latter remains pegged prevailing world prices on the New York stock exchange.

The end of the international coffee and cacao agreements saw international prices for these commodities crash and they have since remained both relatively low and highly volatile since producer nation quotas were withdrawn for commodities whose demand remains relatively stable. In this context, increased (commodity) market integration via conversion of subsistence to coffee cultivation represents a significant risk for CIOAC's members in Chiapas. As such, no significant conversion has taken place as peasants have decided to retain reproduction strategies that maximise their autonomy from such a volatile and unpredictable market, integrating into it selectively depending on prevailing conditions without ever sacrificing the household's subsistence capacity. Instead they have focused on shifting dependence for monetary income between off-farm wage labour - typically in Mexico's urban centres - and coffee production, based on current and expected received coffee prices. In contrast, the symbiotic relationship between cacao trees and subsistence (shade) crops means that it is much more difficult for FENOCIN's cacao growers to shift production and household labour between cash and subsistence crops than it is for CIOAC's coffee growers, whose subsistence and commercial plots are geographically distinct. For the former, any attempt to intensify subsistence production would significantly reduce the production of cacao. As such, adverse conditions in cacao markets have led to increased integration into labour markets with wage work on local banana and palm oil plantations predominating.

As mentioned in the previous section, a significant factor shaping the reproduction strategies of coffee and cacao producing households in the neoliberal era has been the growing influence of TNCs in the control of the coffee and cacao supply chains and the expansion of their operations into certified beans in the context of an inherently volatile world market. This has had significant impacts on CIOAC and FENOCIN's producers who are

finding it increasingly difficult to make a living from their coffee and cacao. With real prices for certified coffee and cacao falling year on year and costs of production increasing, many producers are leaving their organisations as the extra work required to fulfil certification requirements is not worth the extra income that certification generates.

'We currently work with 110 producers. Before we worked with over 600. Quality requirements were less strict before - now we have to carry out inspections to ensure buyers that all our produce is organic'. **UREAFA Representative (2 October 2012, Jitotol).**

'I used to sell to UREAFA, but they became too demanding - they want clean beans, (all the) same size. Prices rose with the coyote (intermediary) so it seemed better to sell to them and have more time for other things, especially for the milpa' **Rojas Lopez, CIOAC member in the community of Amate, Jitotol (30 September 2012, village of Amate, Jitotol).**

'Now the price is at \$102 a quintal but two years ago it rose to a maximum of \$170. But just before this, about three years ago, it fell to just \$70. At \$100 we can only cover our production costs; if it falls to less than this we have to think twice about spending money, the family suffers because we have almost nothing.' **Luis Cabrera, FENOCIN (UROCAL) cacao producer (30 April 2013, Shumiral, Azuay Province).**

In Chiapas many producers have left UREAFA because of the increasingly demanding production requirements for organic coffee. They agree that it is better to lose their organic certification and sell conventional coffee for slightly less and have more time for the milpa (subsistence production) and 'other things', i.e. various forms of wage labour. The majority of the growers that left UREAFA did so between 2000 and 2002 when the prices fell to between MX\$ 3 and MX\$ 5 per kilo (US\$ 0.2 - 0.3). In that period the coffee was just left to rot on the trees as it wasn't worth harvesting. During these years labour time expended on the subsistence plot and engaged in wage work predominated in household reproduction strategies. Producers exercised the degree of autonomy from the market that ownership of the land confers to them by distancing themselves from unfavourable commodity market conditions to depend more on producing their own subsistence, and further securing it via deeper integration into the labour market. The capacity to partially withdraw from, and shift between, varying degrees of integration into commodity markets, labour markets and subsistence production that land access and subsistence production provides acts as a refuge from neoliberal restructuring (Vergara-Camus, 2014: 28). Indeed, in the 1970s and 1980s coffee plots had themselves become a refuge for peasants that could no longer generate surpluses in milpa production for the money income necessary to survive. Over

the course of these two decades, the number of coffee producers doubled nationally (Bartra, 2001: 44).

In contrast to the first years of the 21st Century, in 2011 UREAFA's remaining members received the best prices in the history of the organisation, reaching a maximum of MX \$53 per kilo (US\$ 4.5). Household labour time expended on coffee plots was therefore maximised during the harvesting period (3-4 months) and drawn away from subsistence production and wage labour. It was also common to employ wage labour for three or four weeks during the picking period to maximise harvests at a time when market prices were so high. Those that remain part of UREAFA, and producers of organic coffee more generally, must typically employ wage labour for at least one month a year owing to the quality and standard requirements demanded by their cooperatives. This is because (relatively) high quality coffees that characterise organic markets require uniformity in terms of grain sizes and maturity and so must be harvested more intensively (in a smaller harvest window based on optimal cherry ripeness) and more extensively (repeat visits to the plot in order to select cherries only when they ripen). This represents a significant expense that contrasts with conventional producers that typically sell mixed size and maturity (therefore quality) beans to local intermediaries. These are, in turn, bought by exporters and used to make blended, low quality coffees. Those CIOAC members that had left UREAFA still received between MX\$40 and MX\$48 (US\$ 3.5 - 4.1) per kilo in 2011 for conventional coffee from local intermediaries and have not since been tempted to try to re-join UREAFA. The extra household labour time required to meet organic quality standards and the need to contract labour during the harvest period is not considered worthwhile given current price differentials between organic and conventional coffee, and the inherently volatile nature of those prices. Instead, devoting relatively more time to subsistence plots and wage labour is deemed a more secure and predictable reproduction strategy.

Analysis of CIOAC and FENOCIN members' reproduction strategies gives important insights into the importance of relative autonomy from the market for peasant producers and how it is exercised in order to try to ensure household reproduction and its continued access to land - itself the basis of that autonomy. Despite subsequent conversion of coffee to milpa in Oaxaca following INMECAFE's departure the fact remains that producers never completely turned their land over to coffee during the years in which the institute guaranteed certain minimum prices and security that all coffee produced would be sold. CIOAC's coffee producers still decided to retain milpa when in purely financial terms it would appear to

have made more sense to devote all land to coffee and buy staples with the extra income earned from the sale of the cash crop. This reluctance to completely integrate household production with the market is part of a logic of production that values a degree of autonomy from the market that better secures the long term maintenance of the family on the land far more than the possibility of receiving higher prices at the cost of increased exposure to potentially immiserating market forces. Although social property relations in Mexico mean that dispossession is not the threat that it is in Ecuador, increased exposure to the vicissitudes of volatile coffee markets through increased devotion of land and/or household labour to coffee production could force family members from the land and into the labour market in periods of low prices. This market is increasingly insecure and informal, and CIOAC's coffee growers attempt to avoid it as much as possible through the maintenance of subsistence production as a space of relative autonomy. As we saw earlier, wage labour is a significant and relatively stable component of household reproduction strategies for FENOCIN's coastal peasants. Their proximity to highly capitalised banana and palm oil plantations makes wage labour a predictable source of income for peasant household reproduction strategies. Banana production is year round, relatively labour intensive and, importantly, local. This contrasts with CIOAC's coffee producers in regions where sources of wage employment are locally scarce, making seasonal migration to harvest export crops in northern Mexico, and more long-term migration to the country's urban centres and abroad, necessary to secure household reproduction. Whereas subsistence production acts as the ultimate fall back for CIOAC's coffee growers, for FENOCIN's cacao growers plantation labour can reliably provide the necessary income to meet family subsistence requirements in bad years for cacao prices or production without having to convert cultivation from cash to staple crops. However, the importance of wage labour for both organisations' members is often under-reported. There is significant reluctance on the part of cacao producers to admit that wage labour represents anything more than a minor supplement of their incomes, only carried out at times when all family labour is not required on the family production unit.

The desire to reduce dependence on the labour market is a strong incentive for both CIOAC's coffee growers and FENOCIN's cacao producers. In the case of the former the reasons appear more obvious; local sources of stable wage employment are scarce, forcing seasonal migration far from the family plot for up to five months a year on export plantations in northern Mexico, or more permanent migration to Mexico's urban centres and abroad, namely the USA. In both of these situations predominantly indigenous

peasants, many of which speak Spanish as a second language, household dependence on wage labour means leaving families and communities for extended periods and suffering what are often extremely difficult, insecure and oppressive employment conditions. For FENOCIN's producers there is also a strong desire for increased autonomy from the labour market despite very different employment experiences from those of CIOAC's indigenous members. The vast majority of FENOCIN's coastal peasants work year-round on nearby banana plantations close to their own production units and are not forced to leave their families for extended periods in order to meet household reproduction requirements. Wage income is therefore a relatively predictable component of peasant reproduction strategies, more predictable in fact than cacao production in a volatile commodity market. With land accessed on the basis of private property relations and cacao production financed largely by local intermediaries, dispossession in the event of production and/or market difficulties is a real and ever present threat for FENOCIN's cacao growers.

When both organisations' producers talk about the period of internationally managed markets it is not the higher relative prices that they used to receive that they miss most now, but the security that guaranteed prices and purchase provided them. This degree of certainty meant that peasant families could plan for the future and have a relatively stable and predictable production cycle with costs and expenses that fluctuated little year on year. Now the biggest concern these producers have is that prices can fluctuate enormously not just year on year but even during the harvest, making it very difficult to plan a stable household survival strategy; in years of high coffee prices in Mexico, small producers often hire labour, normally neighbours' children, to help with the harvest as economically it is worth maximising the harvest and paying for the labour to do so. For CIOAC's coffee growers in Chiapas this practice is extensive; when prices are good labour is hired locally, typically ejidatarios' and comuneros' children, in exchange for nominal wages and meals. In years where prices fall, little time is spent on the harvest with fruit left to rot on the trees and household labour seeks work off the family land. Most years no labour is hired and the family makes do with its own labour, as much on the coffee field as is deemed worth the prevailing price with varying degrees of off-farm work to meet the families' reproduction requirements. However, this strategy applies only to the harvest period (three to four months a year) when prices are known. The problem is that during the rest of the year when maintenance of the coffee field needs to be carried out i.e. pruning, replacement of old trees, fertilisation etc. future prices, and therefore the returns that this work will eventually receive, is still unknown. As such there is naturally a tendency to carry out

minimal maintenance and very little investment in renovation of the field given that this labour and expense may very well constitute a significant loss come harvest time. To minimise risk, increase household income security and, ultimately, retain the family on the land for the relative autonomy from the market that it provides, peasant families instead take up various forms of seasonal and permanent wage labour where security of remuneration is (usually) known in advance and risks of not meeting family survival needs minimised. Family labour time dedicated to the milpa throughout the year exceeds that of the coffee field as security of subsistence is thus assured, while future coffee prices are always unknown. As with CIOAC's coffee producers, the volatility of the cacao market creates a disincentive for FENOCIN's members to devote household labour to the cacao plot above basic maintenance, or invest in inputs and improvements, as future prices (therefore remuneration of labour and the covering of costs) is unknown until the harvest season. Devoting too much household labour on the plot and financing improved production through credit arrangements with local intermediaries runs the risk of dispossession if the market drops. Work on local plantations is relatively much more secure, and cacao production currently acts as a supplement to household incomes which are derived primarily from off-farm wage labour.

Subsistence production is then an essential fall back in the context of usually unpredictable, insecure and oppressive labour markets for CIOAC's predominantly indigenous coffee producers, and volatile coffee prices. For FENOCIN, wage labour on local plantations represents a similar fall back, year-round and predictable as it is as a component of household reproduction strategies. The combined effects of coffee and cacao market volatility, increasing costs of production and reducing or stable real prices for coffee on average has resulted in even less time being spent on maintaining and improving commercial production. Those members of both organisations still producing certified coffee and cacao face a similar dilemma as organic prices are as volatile as those for conventional; while price received is slightly higher the peasant household is more concerned with stability than price per se so the dangers of market dependence remain comparable. Although fair-trade always pays a minimum price, supposedly providing an important level of security for producers, CIOAC and FENOCIN's members complain that this minimum price has not increased in line with ever increasing production costs and is simply not sufficient for survival. In addition, the premium paid for organic beans is simply not worth the extra costs and effort required to meet certification standards.

'The difference between organic and conventional coffee prices are too small...now we don't have the certification; we continue to produce organically but it's really expensive to get the certification and it's not worth it at the moment with the price difference...In the first years of Fair Trade supports arrived and the producers benefitted. But within CEPCO (the Fair Trade coop he was part of) expenses increased and the benefits stopped reaching the producers'. **Celso Jiménez, Leader of Pergamino Mazateco, a CIOAC affiliated cooperative in Huautla de Jiménez, Oaxaca (28 November 2012, Huautla de Jiménez).**

As a result of the fall in real prices, anything more than one production cycle receiving the FT minimum price would be very difficult for producers to sustain and so increasing dependence on it as part of a household reproduction strategy would expose peasants to significant hardships and the need to integrate further into labour markets.

Although the focus here has been on producers' struggles to increase their autonomy *from* coffee and cacao markets as attempts to carve out autonomous spaces *within* it via FT and organic schemes have been progressively restricted, this has not simply led to the termination of the latter struggles and a reversion to a logic in which autonomy from the market alone prevails (i.e. Ploeg 2008 & 2010). Some of FENOCIN's coastal organisations are renewing attempts to exercise autonomy within the market by differentiating their product entirely from conventional cacao varieties. They are using the unique flavour characteristics of Ecuador's national variety in an attempt to market it as a different commodity, a commodity over which producers themselves will have autonomous control over production and marketing, and therefore a great deal of control over the market itself. For some of FENOCIN's coastal organisations, certification schemes in all their forms are simply not sufficient to provide the level, or even form, of autonomy within the market that they desire. These schemes still force peasant livelihoods to be based upon selective integration/disintegration into a volatile, exploitative commodity market and dependence on external plantation and/or urban labour. Instead they believe that real autonomy can only be achieved by completely withdrawing from a market dominated by transnational exporters and processors, and the creation of a new one based on producer control of production and marketing. Only by generating and controlling their own market do these producers believe they can really secure a significant degree of autonomy, thus improving and stabilising their incomes and consolidating their production units and their ownership of the land.

In attempting to remove themselves from the conventional cacao market by achieving market recognition for their unique variety of cacao, these producers are not only

attempting to renegotiate or re-establish their integration into commodity markets on the basis of producer control of the value chain, from production to marketing. They are also striving to free themselves from dependence on the labour market. There is widespread hope among FENOCIN's coastal peasants that if such recognition can be gained, a better and more stable income will result from cacao production which, in turn, will encourage more labour time to be spent on improving cacao production, further improving incomes in a positive feedback cycle. As a result, dependence on wage labour on banana plantations may be reduced, if not eliminated, from the reproduction strategies of the most successful cacao producer households. The hope is that increased autonomy *within* the cacao market through peasant control over the production and marketing of the crop can deliver increased autonomy *from* the labour market as well.

The proposal to differentiate Ecuador's national cacao from other standard varieties is being actively taken up by the Ministry of Agriculture (MAGAP) under President Correa's administration, but currently the programme is still in the early phase of certifying national cacao producers and tracing beans from farm to port and so its impacts on autonomous struggles are yet to be seen. Whether producers can create and control their own market, autonomously manage it, and defend it not only from transnational capital but also the Ecuadorian state, will be a major challenge. As we will see below, new forms of autonomous struggles within coffee and cacao markets are also developing in response to emerging quality dynamics in both sectors.

The preceding analysis of peasant struggles in the neoliberal era demonstrates that the logic of production for CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers cannot be determined by purely economic rationality with household labour employed solely on the basis of where it will receive the best returns. In Bartra's (1982: 92) terms, the peasant economy is constituted by diverse activities, from commodity and subsistence production to wage labour, all organically intertwined. There is no specific logic for each one of these considered separately; the economic logic of the peasant household is regulated by a combined rationality of all household activities, not with profit maximisation as a goal, but the reproduction of its socio-economic existence (Ibid; 44). And this long-term existence depends on the maintenance and exercise of a degree of autonomy from commodity and labour markets which allows the peasant household to shift the application of its labour power between various activities depending on market conditions, for example, protecting itself from adverse conditions in the commodity market through withdrawal, and increased

integration into the labour market. To categorise the modern peasantry as 'petty commodity producers' and the over-simplified claim that 'agents of this form of production are capitalists and workers at the same time' (Bernstein, 2001: 29) cannot explain (non-capitalist) peasant production and reproduction strategies other than by attributing a separate logic to the supposedly distinct (and contradictory) realms of 'capitalist' and 'worker', eliminating peasant agency from shaping these strategies. However, the capacity to shift labour in the ways described above demonstrates that the household does not operate under capitalist rationality as the market remains, in Wood's (2002) terms, more of an opportunity rather than the imperative that it is for capitalist producers. For CIOAC's producers that occupy land on the basis of social property relations, this is even more the case as outright dispossession is not the threat that it is for FENOCIN's peasants. They may be forced to leave the land as a consequence of unviable production, but they cannot be forced to sell to repay loans in the way that FENOCIN's private property holders can.

As we have seen in the case of both FENOCIN and CIOAC, even though quantitatively household labour power can be employed in shifting constellations depending on prevailing market conditions, qualitatively this labour is not the same. Household labour employed on the family production unit, whether this be in cash crop or subsistence production, is much more highly valued than off-farm wage labour. Under cash crop production, while labour is formally subsumed under capital, which now dominates world agriculture in the contemporary 'corporate food regime' (McMichael, 2007) and has subordinated peasants into global circuits of production, trade and finance (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010: 178), producers still retain a significant degree of autonomy regarding production decisions and the organisation of household labour. Apart from retaining access to land as a means of possessing a degree of autonomy that acts as a buffer against, and insures against the risks of, depending entirely on the market for existence, the land itself defines who these peasants are. Even if, quantitatively, wage labour is the greatest contributing factor to peasant household incomes, qualitatively these households conceive of themselves as independent producers on their own land and this significantly shapes the nature of their struggles for autonomy and their class consciousness. Contrasted with peasants' experiences in oppressive, exploitative and insecure forms of wage employment, the (relative) autonomy from the market and control over the labour process afforded by control over the means of production is highly valued by CIOAC and FENOCIN members, even if this control in reality entails subordination to capital and a difficult struggle for survival. Land represents a degree of control over the labour process and of their own

destinies that dispossession and/or proletarianisation would destroy. This is the fundamental basis of peasant struggles for land, both for access to it for the landless, and for improved access and the ability to make it produce for marginalised smallholders. The lack of interest for struggling for better conditions in the labour market is difficult to understand if peasant household dependence on wage labour is examined only quantitatively, and separate from an analysis of the peasant household logic of production and reproduction as an organic whole. This whole consists of diverse activities, all geared to sustaining the long term integrity and viability of the production unit, the nucleus of the peasant household. However, if we understand this logic as being based on ensuring the peasant household's socio-economic existence and wellbeing, with complete independence from the labour market and (relative) autonomy in the commodity market constitutive of this, then we are better able to analyse the nature and content of contemporary peasant struggles.

So far the struggle to reduce or completely eliminate dependence on wage labour from household reproduction strategies has been explained in terms of adversity experienced by peasants in the labour market, and, in the case of CIOAC's coffee growers, the need to migrate far from home communities in order to find work. However, other no less important factors also shape this desire. The social status of the peasantry in southeast Mexico and coastal Ecuador is strongly tied to the land and making it produce. The shame expressed by some FENOCIN members that depend on wage employment, but who downplay its importance for their survival, is tied to the negative interpretation of wage labour dependence as an expression of failure as a producer on the land.

Another factor driving struggles for complete autonomy from the labour market, in addition to social status as a successful peasant producer, is related to control of the labour process itself. As owners of the land and their means of production, peasants as commodity producers are not fully subsumed by capital and still retain relative control over the labour process. As such, they do not experience the alienation and marginalisation associated with their experiences in the labour market. For indigenous coffee producers in southeast Mexico, the labour market imposes racial forms of oppression, exploitation and marginalisation. For both FENOCIN and CIOAC members, the contrast between working for themselves as subsistence and commodity producers, or having their labour controlled by others as wage labourers, drives their struggles to improve production as a means of escaping from the labour market. This desire for control of the labour process is also

highlighted by Vergara-Camus' (2009: 382-383) work with the EZLN in Chiapas and the MST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra) in Brazil, where 'the desire to be free of the dependence on someone else's will in the effort to sustain their families came up again and again' in interviews with these organisations' members. The desire for withdrawal from the labour market helps explain why CIOAC and FENOCIN's members have shown little interest in labour organising in the past, or, as is the case for coffee growers in Chiapas, have willingly broken agreements with landlords which would appear to go against their own best interests (see previous chapter). Not only are both organisations' peasants uninterested in organising around wage employment, seeing it as a temporary necessary evil that will eventually be rendered unnecessary through improved production, but any form of labour organising risks jeopardising the overriding goal of eliminating household dependence on off-farm employment altogether. It could result in peasants losing their jobs, threatening the viability of household reproduction strategies, and, ultimately, losing access to or being expelled from the land itself. This is why struggles are focused on productive issues, not on wage labour. The latter, which is not valued anyway, needs to be escaped from, not improved. Ultimately, it is hoped that dependence on it will be reduced, and eventually eliminated, through successful struggles to promote peasant production.

3.9 Cash Crops and Food Sovereignty

Given the preceding analysis and the argument that struggles for autonomy form the basis of contemporary demands for land (both access to it and the ability to make a viable living on it), the issue of how this articulates with and shapes (or not) the food sovereignty movement as a whole needs to be addressed. Burnett and Murphy (2014: 1069) rightly claim that there is little evidence that the food sovereignty movement works with small-scale farmers whose production is exported. There is no clear agenda presented for them, leaving uncertain what place there is within food sovereignty as a concept and as a movement for small-scale producers whose production is exported. For Mexico and Ecuador's coffee and cacao producing VC members, this argument is certainly accurate. State withdrawal from the peasant sector affected producers of coffee and cacao in very similar ways to staples producers, yet the former's interests have not been incorporated into the discourse and struggles of the VC and its conception of food sovereignty. The authors also state that, while not explicitly rejecting trade, the movement is identified with a strong preference for local (or national, particularly in the case of Mexico) markets. It

challenges existing international trade structures and, on the whole, its official position on trade remains ambiguous (Ibid: 1065). This is a problem given that tens of millions of smallholders worldwide depend on international trade of the cash crops they produce for survival and so this aspect of their production and reproduction strategies, and of their struggles for autonomy, are marginalised or even ignored by the food sovereignty movement.

Since its inception, the VC has contested the legitimacy of the WTO as an institution for the governance of food and agriculture (Burnett and Murphy, 2014: 1065) and demanded that agricultural policies be exempt from WTO trade rules. International trade has been a central focus of the VC's work which has aimed to transform international trade structures and the rules institutionalised in trade agreements and upheld by the WTO (Ibid: 1067). For the VC, the WTO promotes and defends neoliberal trade policies that naturalise the market as a site of agricultural efficiency for heavily subsidised and institutionally protected (through trade agreements) corporate producers (McMichael, 2009: 299), and has generated a systemic international agrarian crisis. However, despite the VC's critical stance on agricultural trade under neoliberalism, there is no necessary contradiction between cash and staple crop production within the food sovereignty movement. The Via Campesina (2003a) defines 'food sovereignty' as 'the peoples', countries' or state unions' right to define their agricultural and food policy, without any dumping vis-à-vis third countries'. As Patel (2009: 663) states, food sovereignty is fundamentally 'a call for peoples' right to shape and craft food policy' and does not limit itself simply to staples production for domestic consumption.

While not rejecting trade, the food sovereignty movement has however come to be characterised by its criticisms of existing international trade structures. Its failure to address the role of peasant cash crop producers under food sovereignty has led to misplaced assumptions that the movement, rather than being against contemporary institutions and practices of international trade, is against trade per se. For example, Aerni (2011: 27) claims that the food sovereignty movement implies that every country is capable of producing and distributing sufficient food for its inhabitants without any need to resort to agricultural trade. This claim originates not from the movement itself, but rather from the ambiguity that results from its lack of engagement with the issue of international trade. The Via Campesina (2003b) clearly states that 'food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples

to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production'. However, it has failed to adequately elaborate or engage with the mechanisms by which trade should be conducted under food sovereign systems. Burnett and Murphy even make the assumption that the movement wishes to actively convert export-producers to staples producers when they state that 'the food sovereignty movement has not explained how such producers might make the transition to a new livelihood, nor whether it is a transition that the producers involved actually want to make' (Ibid: 1071). Edelman (2014: 974) similarly asks the question 'what will become of the millions of smallholders who depend for their livelihoods on export production and whose unions would plummet if they were required to switch, say, from cacao or African palm production to cassava and maize?'. Common to these perceptions is the lack of identification of who precisely is suggesting that producers be forced to change their production strategies. The idea that such a change be made is absurd at the level of peasant organisations themselves and their grassroots members in Mexico and Ecuador and far removed from their demands and proposals. Rather than seeking to 'transition' peasant producers, the VC and its organisations instead strive for their rights as producers to shape their own food and agricultural systems whether these be staples, export crops or various combinations of the two. The VC's Nyéléni declaration of 2007 clearly proposes this and in no way rejects the role of trade under the banner of food sovereignty.

'Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations... Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition' (Via Campesina, 2007, Nyéléni declaration).

Even if contemporary institutions and practices of international trade under neoliberalism are rejected by the food sovereignty movement, export crops are clearly central to the livelihoods of many rural households, especially those of CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers. Yet this importance has not been adequately addressed by the VC, begging the question put forward by Koning and Jongeneel (2006: 2) as to what role can export crops play in a policy that has adopted food sovereignty as its driving strategy? It is clear from both the VC's own definition of food sovereignty as producers' rights to define their own food and agricultural systems, and peasant organisation leaders, that there is no

necessary contradiction between staples and export cash crop production. At the grassroots level, the struggles for autonomy analysed demonstrate the articulation between cash crop and subsistence production (as well as wage labour) as part of the overall struggle to make a viable living from the land. The fundamental issue here is not a dichotomy between staples and export production - it is that the peasantry's own organisations, not transnational capital, have a key role in shaping policy and that the state intervenes to support sustainable peasant production, regardless of whether production is for national consumption or for export. The extract below, taken from an interview with the leader of a FENOCIN organisation on the Ecuadorian coast, is instructive as the changes his organisation calls for regarding the cacao sector are akin to the VC's core demands for food sovereignty.

'What we are trying to do is make the state intervene and, as a country, have a clear position regarding how to manage the system of production, how to be sustainable, efficient and competitive. This applies to cacao as well. This has to do with productivity, with infrastructure and marketing. The government should support the peasant sector much more, in services, market information, in helping the peasantry organise autonomously. It's also a struggle against TNCs and for market power...There is a need for producers to create alliances that strengthen production and marketing and establish direct links between organised producers and organised consumers in the US and Europe. The state needs to support these direct linkages...involve itself much more directly in processes of commercial exchange'. **Joaquín Vázquez, UROCAL president (1 May 2013, Machala).**

Rather than articulating a separate discourse for cash crops and incorporating it into the food sovereignty movement, the VC would do well to articulate staple and cash crop production as mutually constitutive elements of struggles for peasant control of food and agricultural systems in much the same way as both are currently mutually constitutive elements of peasants' own struggles for relative autonomy from and within the market. The separation between the two is artificial in terms of CIOAC and FENOCIN's peasants' struggles for autonomy and survival. The VC's tendency to focus on trade as an instrument of oppression without acknowledging its importance to many grassroots struggles and the proposals put forward by its cash crop producing members has led critics of food sovereignty to question the feasibility of the movement's demands. It has also marginalised a numerically and politically important fraction of the movement whose issues specific to cash crop production are currently largely ignored by the VC. This lack of representation is a serious issue for CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers given newly emerging production relations developing in both sectors in response to increasing demand for

quality, single origin beans. Through analysis of the nature these emerging dynamics and CIOAC and FENOCIN's members' engagement with these processes, the following section will attempt to demonstrate how such struggles for improved production and viability of the peasant production unit are playing out in concrete terms.

3.10 TNE-Producer Relations in Mexico and Ecuador's Coffee and Cacao Sectors

During the era of the International Coffee and Cacao Agreements the commodity chains of these products were not 'driven' by any particular actor, nor was it possible to claim that either producing or consuming countries controlled them (Ponte, 2002: 253). Liberalisation, however, has placed these chains into buyers' hands and international processors have become the dominant agents (Ibid: 254). Large transnational exporters (TNEs) now control most of the coffee and cacao chains and both value and surplus have been increasingly transferred to consumer countries (Johannessen S & Whilite, 2010: 540).

The end of international supply management and subsequent price drops following liberalisation, the bankruptcy of many national and international exporters, lack of credit, and state withdrawal from the peasant sector returned control of the coffee and cacao sectors to TNEs and private intermediaries (Renard, 2010: 23). A process of capital concentration has taken place in both sectors in both Mexico and Ecuador. In the former, control of the coffee sector is now concentrated in five main companies; Nestlé, AMSA (United Agro-industries of Mexico), Jacobs, Expogranos and Becofisa-Volcafe (Hernandez Navarro, 2004). In Ecuador, control of the cacao sector is similarly concentrated by Transmar, Olam, Armajaro and Nestlé (Reyes, 2014). In both countries these TNEs have increasingly put local buyers out of business and installed their offices and warehouses in the most important production regions. Much of their power lies in their financial capacity, able to finance local intermediaries to supply their warehouses with beans from across producer regions. Producer organisations compete with TNEs and their buyers for the purchase of coffee and cacao, and do so at a distinct disadvantage. Private buyers - often financed by transnational exporters - normally have the capacity to pay producers the full amount at the moment they purchase the beans, whereas coops typically pay a first instalment on receiving the produce and complete the payment on receipt of funds from the final (usually foreign) buyer (Pérez-Grovas et al, 2001: 11).

Since 2010 Mexico's coffee sector has seen the rapid development of a quality driven initiative by the handful of transnational coffee exporters that concentrate power in the sector. With Northern consumers - driven by retailers' marketing strategies - increasingly demanding high quality, single origin, traceable coffee, these exporters have been forced to expand further upstream into their supply chains in order to ensure that they can meet these growing quality requirements. Even though they still source the majority of their Mexican coffee through contractual credit arrangements with intermediaries, an increasing proportion of the coffee they buy now originates from direct relationships that they have established with producer groups. They have set up installations in the commercial urban centres of coffee growing municipalities where they buy coffee and from where they organise production systems with the producers they work with. AMSA, Mexico's biggest coffee buyer, currently sources around ten percent of its coffee through such relationships and is keen to emphasise the social development, rather than market driven aims for doing this (Source: Juan Carlos Morales, Head of AMSA in the Highlands of Chiapas).

'We have supply chains (like this) in order to, firstly, avoid intermediation - the producer suffers in times of low prices, the intermediary doesn't. The intermediaries always have their profits. Secondly, for quality. Now, everything has to do with quality and we have to continue improving it if we want to push forward. Juan Carlos Morales, head of AMSA in the highlands of Chiapas (27 December 2012, San Cristóbal de las Casas).

Despite recognising the problems producers face as a result of being forced to sell to intermediaries, AMSA still finances intermediaries to buy 90 percent of its beans, the majority of which is sold to Nestlé for making cheap, instant coffee. There is no incentive for these producers to improve quality as intermediaries pay the same price for all volumes regardless of bean size and quality characteristics. Coffee exporters are not interested in differential payment based on quality and have no quality separation system at their installations as their goal is to buy 90 percent of their coffee as cheap as possible while sourcing ten percent of their coffee as high quality through direct intervention in production. Since the INMECAFE years Mexican coffee has received a negative price differential of, on average, between five and ten percent below prevailing world market prices. According to national peasant and coffee organisation leaders (Javier Galvan, UNORCA; Fernando Celis, CNOC - National Coordinator of Coffee Organisations), this price punishment is maintained by TNEs as it gives them a competitive advantage over other low quality coffee producing companies in other countries. By continuing to buy Mexico's poor quality coffee without attempting improve the product, and passing on the negative price

differential to producers, they claim that the role of Mexico as a low quality supplier is sustained, keeping producers in poverty. Their quality driven certified markets for which they source ten percent of their coffee operate under different conditions of supply and demand, not based primarily on maximum production for minimum costs, and thus do not receive the stock exchange price 'punishment' conventional Mexican coffee receives.

Direct TNE-producer relations are very similar to contract farming arrangements, despite not involving paper contracts themselves. The producers assume all the risks of production (see Clapp [1988], for an overview of the social relations of contract farming in Latin America) in return for TNE provided plants, technical assistance and basic infrastructure. According to TNE representatives they do not want to enter into contractual relations with producers as they are concerned with fostering community development and relationships based on trust and mutual respect that, they claim, a contractual relationship cannot achieve. However, the following exchange with AMSA Mexico's head of operations offers a different perspective as to why contracts are not signed:

'(Me) Why do you not have contracts with the producers in your direct supply chains?

If you want to form a long-term relationship with producers you have to do it through trust - if you force things on your providers and another buyer comes along, your clients will leave you from one day to the next.

(Me) And also, if the market for their coffee falls, you (AMSA) don't have the obligation of buying from them either?

Exactly'. Santiago Arguello, National Director of AMSA (14 February 2013, México City.

In addition, TNEs simply do not need to enter into contracts with producers in a market characterised by massive oversupply and in which no other buyer can compete with TNE prices. As part of the relationship, TNEs pay producers the prevailing New York stock exchange price for their coffee at the moment of sale, a price that only this handful of companies can offer. Cooperatives producing for certified European coffee markets, typically the best paying, can rarely match this price, let alone better it, and typically cannot pay producers the full amount until their coffee has been paid for following shipping. As a result, this new dynamic represents a significant threat to their futures as viable organisations. Many cooperative leaders believe that TNEs' decision to pay the Stock Exchange price to producers is a direct attempt to increase their market share, and eventually control the market, by destroying cooperatives as a source of competition.

'AMSA, their employees, arrive in the communities. They increase prices. It's a strategy to finish us off. The people don't understand - if they pay five dollars more than us it's a benefit in the short term'. Alfonso López Santiz, director of operations, Kulaktik cooperative in Chiapas (25 October 2012, Tenejapa).

For those which enter into direct selling agreements with the TNEs there is a great deal of variation in producer opinions regarding the situation.

'Last year we sold five tonnes to AMSA and received 42 pesos per kilo. They didn't take anything away from the people like the coyotes do, that's why the people like it. The people here think that this group (AMSA) is going to work well. But they don't help us directly - we had the opportunity to work directly with them with their supports for certification but we said no.

(Me) Why, are there risks?

Yes, they want to gather all the producers. But we want to retain our independence and search for alternative markets; we don't want obligations with AMSA'.

Felipe Palacios Chazares, Leader of the 'Organización de Cafeticultores del Eloxochitlan de Flores Magon', part of CIOAC (5 December 2012, City of Oaxaca).

'We sold to AMSA last year. The agreement is that they buy all our coffee and they help us with certification.

(Me) What certification?

'Adopta un cafetal' (Adopt a coffee plot, AMSA's own certification scheme). They haven't fulfilled the majority of their promises - they told us they were going to give us invoices on time (in order to receive the state production subsidy 'sistema fomento productivo') but they haven't. They don't really want to help us. But they are supporting the certification transition and they gave us all the training they promised. But now they've hooked us as we have to keep selling to them to continue the transition'. Arturo Carrera González, member of 'Organización de Cafeticultores Na-Davii', San Juan Cuautsospan (30 November 2012, Huautla de Jiménez, Oaxaca).

The above interviews with coffee growers in Oaxaca are representative of the opinions of the majority of peasants considering entering into direct agreements with TNEs. While prices received for their coffee are set to be much higher than those offered by local intermediaries, there is a general lack of trust of the TNEs and what direct linkages with them may signify for their autonomy in the future. Once entered into, CIOAC's peasants worry that their autonomy will be significantly constrained by TNE relations, as they will be increasingly unable to seek out alternative, potentially more stable and better paying niche markets, as production is geared to the requirements of the company, not the producers.

The strategy of transnational cacao companies operating in Ecuador bears a striking resemblance with that of Mexico's coffee TNEs. Since 2009/2010 these companies have begun buying directly from producers at source, with installations set up in cacao growing regions to ensure maximum control of the production process by providing plants, technical assistance and a guaranteed payment for producers' cacao at prevailing New York stock exchange prices which, owing to organisational expenses, most cooperatives simply cannot match. This strategy, as with similar systems in place for Mexican coffee, has been driven by increasing quality requirements that can only be met by standardising and controlling the production process at origin. As with Mexican coffee TNEs, Ecuador's cacao companies like to stress both the quality and the social credentials of their policy. Alberto Nacer, head of marketing at TRANSMAR, the country's biggest cacao buyer, explains the reasons behind company policy:

'We want to directly reach the producer because it's the only way to control 100 percent the quality, the processes of drying and fermentation. There's also the social aspect. Working with the producer we're eliminating intermediation and giving a better price to the producer'. Alberto Nacer, TRANSMAR's head of marketing (7 May 2013, Guayaquil).

And again, as with CIOAC's coffee producers in Mexico, FENOCIN's cacao producers' experiences and opinions regarding TNE policy varies depending largely on their past experiences with independent organising around production and relationships with intermediaries. In Chucaple in the province of Esmeraldas, despite being recipients of a number of NGO (non-governmental organisation) development projects, FENOCIN's members have always depended on local intermediaries for credit and the marketing of their products. This year (2013) the association (Asociación Artesanal de Chucaple - AACH) for the first time sold to Armajaro, a London based international cacao trading company, that has set up a collection warehouse in the City of Santo Domingo around two hour's drive north of the community. With no experience of independent certification schemes or any form of marketing in the past, members are overwhelmingly positive about the relationship and keen for it to develop further, having been promised plants and training by the company for next year.

'(Me) What is the difference between Armajaro and the intermediary?

With Armajaro it's much better. They pay us US\$20 a quintal more than the intermediary. Right now the intermediary is paying \$90 a quintal and Armajaro pays us \$110...They are going to buy as much as we can produce. This year is like a trial, but for next year they say there is training, certification and plants.

(Me) Do you eventually want to stop selling to Armajaro and sell directly to foreign buyers?

We're going to see how it goes with Armajaro. If they carry on paying well, we'll carry on with them'. Manuel Morales, AACH President and part of FENOCIN's national leadership committee (15 April 2013, Chucaple, Esmeraldas)

As we have seen for both CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers, income stability is more highly sought than increased incomes per se. This problem is not going to be resolved through direct relations between producers and exporters, and both organisations' members are acutely aware of this.

'(Me) With Armajaro are you going to resolve the problem of low prices?

No, they're going to pay us about US\$20 more per quintal, but this price still goes with the market price. The price isn't going to stabilise with Armajaro'. Antonio Espinoza Sanchez, AACH member (16 April 2013, Chucaple, Esmeraldas).

While AACH members were keen to establish a direct relationship with a transnational cacao buyer, UNOCYPP (*Unión Noroccidental de Organizaciones Campesinas y Poblacionales de Pichincha*), another FENOCIN cacao producing organisation based in the market town of Puerto Quito on the Western edge of the Andes, was far more sceptical of working this way and eventually did so more or less through compulsion. As with Mexico's independent coffee associations, Ecuador's cacao organisations risk losing their members if they cannot compete with the prices (and increasingly services) now offered by transnational buyers. As a result, some organisations have converted themselves into suppliers for these transnationals in the hope of maintaining their organisations and the more socially oriented services they provide and that go beyond simply paying the market price for cacao and production training.

'Now we sell all our cacao to Nestlé. We started with them in 2010, but I saw it (as something) really bad at the beginning. I didn't know what to do. It's one of the biggest buyers in the country and I didn't want to work with, let's say, the enemy. But I didn't have any other option - carry on selling to the intermediary or sell directly to Nestlé. Here there is no other option so we decided to eliminate the intermediary.

(Me) And how has it been since?

Very good. Nestlé pays between US\$15 and \$20 more per quintal and they don't cheat with the scale - effectively we earn \$30 more per quintal because they weigh it correctly'. Malaquias Santos, President of UNOCYPP and part of FENOCIN's national leadership committee (14 April 2013, Puerto Quito, Pichincha).

As with AACH in Chucaple, price fluctuations are a pressing concern for UNOCYPP's producers and something they believe will not be resolved through the current relationship with Nestlé. Malaquias continues:

'Nestlé pays more but there's a limit; if we want to carry on improving we have to stop selling the bean and become producers of processed cacao products in order to overcome the problem of low prices that fluctuate massively. But I see it as a step (selling to Nestlé) - we don't want to carry on with them forever'.

As we saw earlier, CIOAC and FENOCIN's experiences with fair-trade and organic certification schemes have become increasingly negative over the past decade. Both organisations claim that the difference between certified and conventional prices is ever decreasing, making the extra work necessary to retain these certifications increasingly difficult to justify within household reproduction strategies. With certified and conventional coffee and cacao prices as volatile as they are and production costs that increase year on year, both organisations' members have been forced to integrate further into the labour market and/or seek out further niche markets for their coffee and cacao through attempts to gain recognition from a variety of social and environmentally based certification schemes that have proliferated over the past decade in particular. Having experienced such difficult conditions in their commodity markets throughout the neoliberal era, the opportunity to enter into direct agreements with TNEs offers apparently significant advantages to not only increase incomes through both productivity gains and intermediary avoidance, but also to consolidate peasants' hold on the land (in the case of Ecuador) and their capacity to make a viable living from it, reducing to a degree, or eliminating altogether, labour market integration (in the cases of both Mexico and Ecuador). However, while this strategy does indeed consolidate peasants' viability on the land, at least in the short to medium term, and so in itself represents an important victory in the struggle for autonomy from the market, there is also a limit to how far such arrangements can increase this autonomy.

Throughout this chapter the term 'subsumption' has been used to describe how the labour of CIOAC and FENOCIN's producers is varying, yet not totally, subordinated to capital. The term, as elaborated by Marx, provides a useful analytical framework for understanding how capital penetrating the rural sphere, in this case the peasant coffee and cacao sectors, shapes the labour process of producers and how it is engaged with and contested by peasants in their struggles for autonomy. Marx distinguishes between 'formal' and 'real' subsumption to examine different mechanisms of subordinating the labour process to capital; initially capital 'formally' subsumes the labour process, essentially via mercantile

and monetary relations, a labour process which pre-exists it and in which the cooperation of workers does not require mechanisms of capitalist direction of production (Vercellone, 2007: 19-20). Capital must first subordinate the labour process to its valorisation process (process of surplus value creation) - it must formally subsume it - if it is to reshape that process in its image, or really subsume it. Capital therefore extracts surplus value from the labour process as it is given (Endnotes).

Subsumption of the labour process becomes 'real' when capital moves beyond formal possession of that process to transform it in its own image. Capital steps in to increase labour productivity through technical innovation and other direct alterations to the labour process itself. Why does capital strive to real subsumption if surplus value can already be extracted through formal subsumption i.e. without transforming (and investing in) the labour process itself? The answer lies in the nature of capitalist competition. Formal and real subsumption are closely tied to absolute and relative surplus value. Under the former, surplus value is extracted by capital effectively extending the length of the social working day i.e. coffee and cacao producing peasants expending more labour time on their coffee/cacao plots. Through technical innovation and transformation of the labour process itself, real subsumption enables capital to increase productivity, reducing the labour required to produce a given product. As the value of commodities are determined by the socially-necessary labour time for their production, any capitalist that successfully introduces technical innovation (i.e. successfully increases the productivity of labour) will be able to sell their products at a greater margin of profit (Endnotes). This spurs competing capitalists in the same sector to do the same, driving the transition from formal to real subsumption of labour. However, this distinction between 'formal' and 'real' subsumption is not as clear cut in reality as theoretical debates on the issue tend to assume. In reality the transition from formal to real subsumption may be partial, halted, or even reversible. In addition the transformation itself, and the forms in which subsumption manifests itself, are heavily influenced by peasant struggles. As Das (2012: 184) points out, real subsumption is less likely to emerge as long as absolute surplus value can be appropriated through formal and hybrid forms of subsumption and there is no strong imperative on the part of property owners to resort to methods of relative surplus value. Indeed, as is the case for some of CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers, capital may very often subsume peasant labour through such hybrid forms that actually consolidate the peasantry (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010: 182).

Formally, CIOAC and FENOCIN producers that enter into direct relationships with TNEs retain control of the labour process and are therefore not fully subsumed by capital. Despite the application of TNE financed inputs and technologies on producers' coffee and cacao plots, capital cannot fully subsume the labour process - really subsume it - as it does not own the land itself. It can only increase the degree of formal subsumption of the peasant labour process. This is not simply a question of land ownership as an economic factor of production that lays outside the full control of capital; this land, as the basis of peasant autonomy, confers upon its owners a significant 'room for manoeuvre', or space of relative autonomy from the market, within which a non-capitalist logic of production prevails. As long as this logic prevails, and land remains in the hands of CIOAC and FENOCIN's cacao producers, real subsumption cannot take place as capital cannot fully transform the labour process in its own image. However, the degree of formal subsumption increases as household production and reproduction strategies alter in response to the requirements of capital, and a significant degree of control over the labour process is wrested from them to meet the production and quality demands of exporters. As such, peasants' capacity - or space - to exercise relative autonomy *within* the market in the form of negotiating the terms of market integration and exerting an element of control over production and marketing decisions, is also restricted.

Relative autonomy from the market, or 'room for manoeuvre' that land access confers is also reduced through the commodification and monetisation that household production and reproduction strategies undergo as a consequence of deeper market integration and the increasing formal subsumption to capital that result from TNE-producer relations. As such, the imperatives of the market come to condition these strategies more and more as production becomes ever more geared towards - and dependent on - the demands of capital, for example in the form of TNE production requirements. This loss of autonomy is central to understanding why many producers, especially those with a history of cooperative production, are critical of entering into arrangements with exporters. They know that decisions regarding production will in large part be taken from them and they will be forced to implement methods on their land determined mainly by export companies, further subsuming their labour to the requirements of capital at the expense of a reduction in their relative autonomy both from and within the (commodity) market. Two aspects of peasant autonomy are therefore strengthened; access to/viability of the land itself as production becomes more lucrative/viable, and reduced dependence on the labour market. An increasing degree of formal subsumption would seem to entail the

consolidation of peasants that enter into TNE agreements on the land as viable producers. These relative gains are at the expense of a reduction in control of the labour process and the capacity to exercise autonomy from and within commodity markets. However, while this may be the case in the short to medium term, in the long term there are other risks to peasant autonomy that need to be considered, as well as the impact that these direct producer-exporter relations are likely to have on the autonomy of producers unable or unwilling to enter into these arrangements.

3.11 Longer term Projections

In the long term, the implications of direct producer-TNE relations for peasant autonomy are far from clear. So too are the class dynamics of these relations that will continue to act on an already class differentiated peasantry. On the one hand, consolidation of access to land (Ecuador) and the capacity for smallholders to make a viable living from it (Mexico and Ecuador) would appear to result at the expense of a relative loss of both control over the labour process (increased formal subsumption to capital) and the ability to selectively integrate (the exercise of autonomy) into and out of commodity markets, labour markets and subsistence production depending on prevailing market conditions. However, the nature of the unequal power relations behind arrangements made between TNEs and producers means that peasants have very limited capacity to shape the terms on which they are based. Entering into TNE arrangements significantly restricts, even eliminates, the capacity to exercise autonomy within the market. The vast majority of producers wish to either maintain the certifications which they already hold, namely organic and to a lesser extent, fair-trade, or to receive assistance from TNEs to gain these certifications. However, the current market conditions to which these TNEs are responding through direct linkages with producers are quality, not certification driven. For these exporters, certification is merely a minimum entry requirement for accessing quality coffee and cacao markets, but it is the quality of their products, not the certification itself, that brings in the premiums. As a result, most transnational exporters, including Nestlé and AMSA, have developed their own certification schemes which confer legitimacy on their products for Northern consumers, but which are not as rigorous in their content or application as independent, producer led certification schemes. For example, CIOAC coffee producers in Oaxaca selling to TOMARI, Nestlé's regional buyer, are keen to retain or regain organic certification. However, they have been told that all production will be carried out under the 'sustainable practices' of

the 4C coffee association certification, an industry dominated scheme that effectively defines and certifies TNC's own interpretation of 'sustainability'. 4C is dominated by Nestlé, the world's biggest coffee buyer, and the latter's 'Nescafe Plan', launched in Mexico in 2012, aims to double the amount of Nescafe coffee bought directly from producers from 2012 to 2017, eventually reaching 180,000 tonnes from 170,000 producers annually. All of this coffee, the company claims, will meet internationally recognised 4C sustainability standards by 2015 (Nestlé, 2012).

4C standards, like those of other private sector certification initiatives, are heavily criticised both in the Fair Trade literature and by producer cooperatives themselves for potentially confusing consumers through the proliferation of 'faux-fair' standards (Jaffee & Howard, 2010: 8). Industry initiatives compete with producer initiated Fair Trade and organic certifications without any of the latter's price and social benefits and have far less rigorous and clearly stated standards (Renard, 2010: 30). 4C's environmental standards are certainly far less rigorous than those required for organic certification. Its principles promote that 'use of pesticides is minimised', that 'application of fertilisers is in accordance with the needs of the crop', and for 'preferential use of sustainable energy'. All of these principles are clearly open to interpretation with no specifically prohibited chemicals or production practices (The 4C Association, 2010).

Forced to comply with industry designed certification requirements as part of producer-TNE arrangements, which are designed to meet the needs of capital accumulation rather than those of peasant producers, not only further subsumes the latter to capital, but as a result, increases their dependence on their transnational 'partners'. It jeopardises their continued existence as producers because if the company they are working with decides to move its operations elsewhere for improved profit opportunities, producers will be left without any certifications. Industry own initiatives such as 4C are tied to transnational exporters and retailers. This not only means that producers can only claim such certifications through continuing to sell to their transnational buyers; these certifications themselves are effectively established and administered by export companies and their technicians, not by producer groups themselves as is the case with Fair Trade and organic certifications which promote producer independent organising, knowledge sharing and training. The executive director of Certimex, Mexico's biggest third party organic certification organisation, highlights the fundamental organisational difference between organic certification and industry own 'sustainable' certification schemes.

'Some of the producers certified with us went over to AMSA (to AMSA's industry own certification scheme, similar to 4C), but we asked them - why did you organise in the first place? To avoid intermediation and have control over your own production. With AMSA they are returning to the same thing again, selling to the intermediary, but now the biggest intermediary. Some have returned to us after working with AMSA but they lose the knowledge of the (organic) rules because with AMSA there is no autonomous organising, management and inspection - AMSA does it all. They lose internal (organisational) control'. **Taurino Reyes Santiago, executive director of Certimex (Certificadora Mexicana de Productos y Procesos Ecológicos) (6 December 2012, City of Oaxaca).**

As part of current arrangements between CIOAC's coffee producers in Oaxaca, AMSA and TOMARI provide growers with new plants, fertilisers and pesticides. The same is the case for the FENOCIN organisations UNOCYPP and AACH, working with Nestlé and Armajaro respectively. Whereas traditionally these peasants work with native 'criollo' varieties of coffee and cacao, locally adapted to the specific environmental conditions in which they are grown, those provided by TNEs are 'improved' varieties, more high yielding, but not locally adapted. They are more input demanding in terms of fertiliser and pesticide application, without which crop failure is a real possibility. In the event of TNEs reneging on their arrangements with producers, not only will heavily subsidised inputs no longer be available for now input dependent plant varieties, but the soil will also have become fertiliser dependent, making subsequent reconversion still more difficult both physically and in cost terms. As we saw earlier, some of FENOCIN's cacao producers are part of a national, state-supported drive to create a new market for Ecuador's 'cacao nacional', and producers which enter into agreements with TNEs effectively end the possibility of being involved in this, as traditional varieties are supplanted for TNE provided 'improved' varieties.

In the case that producer-TNE relations remain stable over time, productivity and quality improve, and in the long term peasants consolidate access to, and viable production on, the land, it would seem inevitable that growing dependence of peasants on the TNE's they work with will increase over time. However, does this mean that increasing formal subsumption will eventually lead to the inevitable transition to real subsumption in the future as part of the historic development of capitalism (Vercellone, 2007)? CIOAC and FENOCINs' historic and contemporary struggles for land and autonomy, and their desire to keep hold of land won and make a viable living from it, combined with the inherent risks of agricultural production and transnational capitals' historic experiences with plantation production would seem to point to the conclusion that, while formal subsumption is likely to increase in both cases, full (real) subsumption is far more likely to occur in Ecuador than

in Mexico. Owing to the latter's unique landed property relations, significant concentration of land has historically been blocked as a result of the agrarian reform processes (1917-1992). As we saw with CIOAC's coffee producers in Chiapas, peasant struggles ended plantation production in the north and southeast of the state, and with it peasants' real subsumption to capital. The degree of formal subsumption may now be increasing in cases of TNE-producer arrangements, but even with the 1992 agrarian counter-reform law, significant institutional obstacles remain for capital's ability to concentrate land, and therefore fully subsume producers.

In the case of Ecuador, the predominance of private property relations would appear to make the possibility of a transition to full subsumption - and the complete loss of autonomy - more probable as existing processes of capitalist development and class differentiation in the banana sector demonstrate. As Striffler's (2002) study of agrarian restructuring on the Ecuadorian coast over the course of the 20th Century shows, transnational capital bought up great swathes of productive land to set up banana plantations, dispossessing (and fully subsuming the labour process of) the region's peasants, only to later be forced to leave direct production as a result of popular struggles, political turmoil and crop failures. Control of the land was once again returned to peasants as part of the 1964-1972 land reform process, while transnational capital restructured its operations in the territory on the basis of contract farming. With little or no state support for land reform beneficiaries and without the institutional protection afforded to Mexican coffee growers through the social property system, national rather than international capital began buying up coastal land for intensive banana production on the basis of contractual arrangements with transnational banana companies. Plantation production that fully subsumed the labour process in the region was briefly substituted for peasant production, the labour process of which was only formally subsumed to capital; the peasantry exercised a degree of control of the labour process impossible to conceive of under plantation production, even if this labour process was significantly shaped by the need to produce bananas for sale to transnational buyers in order to survive and remain on the land. A transition to real subsumption subsequently followed as the majority of land reform beneficiaries were forced to sell their plots and work as wage labourers on expanding highly-capitalised export plantations. In the case of contemporary TNE-producer relations in the cacao sector it is foreseeable that those unwilling or unable to enter such agreements and/or improve production will be left unable to compete with TNE financed growers and eventually forced to leave the land.

On the basis of the very different landed property relations between Mexico and Ecuador, FENOCIN's cacao producers are therefore more exposed to processes of dispossession and class differentiation than CIOAC's coffee growers as a result of TNE direct intervention in production among selected peasant groups in coastal Ecuador, within the global dynamic of increasing quality requirements for Arabica coffee and shade grown cacao. UROCAL, one of FENOCIN's biggest coastal organisations, has already been experiencing a process of internal class differentiation since its formation. This accelerated following the 1983 El Niño event as production collapsed and members began to default on the government loans they had taken out to buy their plots. Conflicts ensued between the organisation and its members as many were forced off their land. As a result, the organisations' more successful producers, which now dominate the decision making structures of UROCAL, were able to buy more land and expand banana production for foreign markets. This process of internal class differentiation, with the dispossession of increasingly unviable members by larger, more successful ones, continues to this day. The majority of UROCAL's small producers dedicate their land mainly to cacao, unable to produce more capital intensive bananas. However, within this group of cacao producers, the growing need to invest in improved production for quality is again likely to stimulate processes of internal differentiation. Presently UROCAL's members are attempting to do this through the cooperative, with state subsidised credits and technical assistance to do so now an option as of May 2013. Ecuador's National Development Bank, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, now offers producers individually based credits of \$15,000 maximum per producer at a rate of interest of 5% with negotiated repayment periods. However, TNEs are offering to provide producers with all the necessary inputs to improve production at no cost, and a guaranteed market where prices match those on the New York Stock Exchange. Whether UROCAL's cacao cooperative can sustain itself in the long run in the context of various transnational exporters pushing to attract producers into direct relationships with them under terms in which peasants do not become indebted is yet to be seen. The loss of organisational autonomy, relative control over the labour process, and the potential to move into more value-added markets may seem attractive for many producers if this means they can increase household incomes derived from production, and augment their hold on the land as a result. On the other hand, Mexico's system of ejidal and community land tenure means CIOAC's peasants are generally more protected from forces of dispossession and class differentiation than those of FENOCIN. Mexican coffee producers unable to improve quality will be forced to seek another cash crop, depend more on

subsistence production, or increase integration into labour markets, but the risk of losing their land is much lower than that experienced by FENOCIN's cacao growers.

Contrary to the hopes of many CIOAC and FENOCIN members to use TNEs as a stepping stone to improve production and then end relations with them in order to seek out their own direct buyers in the North and subsequently begin processing their primary materials to add value, it is far more probable that producers will become locked into arrangements with TNEs that become increasingly difficult to leave as production is gradually tailored to the requirements of capital. If producers terminate the relationship their certifications will be revoked, production support withdrawn (plants, inputs, technicians etc.) and they will be forced to return to selling their products on conventional markets controlled by TNE financed intermediaries. Even well established producer cooperatives that have begun selectively selling surplus coffee and cacao to TNEs that they cannot sell into certified markets, and that do not receive plants, inputs or technical assistance from them, are threatened by the mere presence of these companies in their regions. They have seen their members either leave to sell directly to TNEs or only fulfil the organisations' minimum quotas, selling the rest at a higher price to exporters.

'TRANSMAR pays more than us. It does so to eliminate intermediaries, but also to break the organisations. They pay the stock exchange price and we can't compete with that - we have office, technician and technical assistance related expenses...Now we have around 300 members; around 30 have left (since 2010 when TNEs began working directly with producers), and some (remaining) members sell part of their production to the companies, but we don't know how many.

(Me) Given the competition will APOVIN (Organic Producer Association of Vinces) be able to continue as the transnationals operating in the canton attempt to attract more producers?

It's difficult. For example, Olam is now paying above market prices due to inter-company competition; Nestlé, Armajaro, TRANSMAR and Olam all now have presence in the region.' **Julio Cerezo, founder and head of APOVIN cacao cooperative (22 April 2013, Vinces, Los Ríos).**

Many cooperative members feel strongly about supporting the very producer associations that they themselves set up and run, and value the economic and extra-economic benefits these associations bring. These typically include retaining greater autonomy in the form of control over production decisions and the labour process relative to TNE influenced production units, the fostering of a sense of community through various social development projects many cooperatives are involved with beyond their crop focus, the hope of moving beyond production to value added processing activities, and political

representation locally and nationally through their incorporation in national level organisations like CIOAC and FENOCIN. However, the sustained presence of TNEs in regions where cooperatives operate, especially given that they often pay above the prices the latter can offer their members, is likely to significantly weaken, and even break, many independent producer associations in the near future. Most of their members face a difficult struggle for survival and, despite genuine concern for the success of their associations, are likely to be forced to sell to TNEs in bad years, or enter into direct relations with them, due to economic necessity. TNE focus on quality improvement through selective direct intervention in the productive process on peasant plots not only brings with it the benefits and potential risks already discussed. It is also likely to impact on producers unable or unwilling to enter into similar agreements. With markets for both CIOAC and FENOCIN producers' coffee and cacao increasingly quality rather than certification driven, those unable to improve quality are likely to be further marginalised and at increased risk of dispossession and/or dependence on subsistence production and wage labour to meet household reproduction requirements. Processes of class differentiation seem inevitable.

TNEs' quality drive is an international strategy not limited to just Mexico and Ecuador, and represents an effort to further differentiate high and low end markets for coffee and cacao. In the case of coffee, high-yielding, sun grown mono-cropping of robusta varieties on large, mechanised holdings is internationally the predominant form of production for coffee that makes instant blends and is typically grown on capital intensive production units. Arabica varieties, on the other hand, like those grown by CIOAC members, are typically shade-grown, dominated by peasant production, and used to make high quality coffees. Already some of the poorest quality Arabica grown in Mexico is bought by TNEs (via the intermediaries they finance) at very low prices and combined with robustas to make instant coffee. The likelihood is that peasants unable to improve their production will be forced further into low price markets as Arabica quality increases internationally, further reducing the share of household income derived from coffee. In an interview with the head of AMSA in Chiapas I was told that, in the future, the majority of the state's Arabica coffee will no longer reach export-quality as quality increases internationally while Mexican coffee quality continues to fall or stagnate due to aging plants, lack of investment in the sector and a general lack of basic crop maintenance on many peasant holdings for reasons explored above. It will therefore be blended into cheap instant varieties for national consumption. This same international process is at work in the cacao sector too, as sun-grown, high yielding CCN cacao predominantly under mechanised production on large holdings is used

to make lower grade chocolate, while high quality, adapted varieties under peasant production are typically used to make high quality chocolate. Again, FENOCIN's producers unable or unwilling to improve the quality of their production face being forced to sell their cacao for lower prices for the elaboration of relatively low quality chocolate.

3.12 Concluding Comments

This chapter has argued that contemporary peasant struggles in southeast Mexico and coastal Ecuador are struggles for land as the basis of autonomy. Access to land provides CIOAC and FENOCIN's peasants with the ability to shape their own production and reproduction strategies in ways ruled out for capitalist enterprises and fully proletarianised wage labourers. A degree of autonomy from primary commodity (cash and consumption crop) markets and the labour market is highly valued by these peasants. Historical experiences as indentured hacienda workers, and more recent employment in increasingly oppressive, insecure and poorly remunerated labour markets have contributed to struggles of these peasants to retain control over their own labour, and the fruits of that labour. Under neoliberal globalisation, coffee and cacao prices received by CIOAC and FENOCIN's peasants have fallen in real terms and become highly volatile. Increased dependence on subsistence production and/or wage labour has been the response, as these peasants have been able to shift household labour between these three activities (cash-crop/subsistence production/wage labour) in response to prevailing market conditions. However, struggles for autonomy within commodity markets - in the form of FT, organic and other certification based schemes - have also developed as peasants attempt to shape not only the level, but also the form, of their commodity market integration.

Demands for support for peasant agriculture are based on securing access to, and viability of, land itself (the basis of that autonomy), control over household productive decisions and the labour process (the exercise of autonomy) and freedom from dependence on the alienating experiences of the labour market (complete loss of autonomy). While CIOAC and FENOCIN's members may be forced to depend on the capitalist market which subsumes them for their reproduction, it is important to recognise that they still retain a degree of autonomy from the market that allows them to make decisions regarding production and survival ruled out for capitalists and fully-proletarianised wage labourers. They demonstrate logic of production based on securing continued access to land as the nucleus

around which relative independence from the vicissitudes and proletarianising forces of commodity and labour markets can be retained and exercised. This is not a logic based on profit maximisation but on maximising long-term access to, and viability of, land through making decisions regarding production and family labour use that minimise risks of losing or being forced from their land. Many peasants leave their homes to work and send remittances to subsidise unprofitable household plots, not so much because of a desire to preserve peasant tradition, but as part of a strategy to retain the land as a means of reducing their vulnerability to neoliberal globalisation and creating a relatively autonomous space from the imperatives of the market to practice and protect their own social structures and lifestyles (Barkin, 2002: 83). Confusion as to why peasants with land tend to reject labour organising efforts, or decide not to convert subsistence cultivation to apparently much more lucrative cash crop production, result if this logic - with the maintenance of the household production unit as the peasant nucleus at its core - is not appreciated or understood.

The discourses and practice of food sovereignty must not only incorporate, but be built upon, peasant struggles for autonomy. However, the VC currently under-represent the needs of cash crops producers with its ambiguous stance towards international trade, thus marginalising what could be a significant social force in struggles to reverse neoliberal rural policies. The food sovereignty movement must do much more to address the issues discussed above facing peasant cash crop producers if its political and ideological project to transform the neoliberal food regime is to unify the diverse subaltern rural classes currently experiencing unprecedented forces of immiseration and proletarianisation.

Chapter 4. Hegemony, Counter-Hegemony, and the Politics of Food Sovereignty.

The Via Campesina presents the food sovereignty movement as a counter-hegemonic 'movement of movements' attempting to radically transform the neoliberal food regime in favour of environmentally sustainable and democratically operated production systems. In Gramsci's terms it is attempting to forge a new political organisation, a 'modern transnational prince', which aims to expand across the entire social formation as a new organisation of social and political relations (Thomas, 2013: 30). The discourse of food sovereignty emanating from the Via Campesina and the analysts, activists and academics that promote and defend it, articulate a radical alternative to neoliberalism. However, counter-hegemonic discourse is not synonymous with counter-hegemonic practice. This chapter will interrogate the transformative potential of the food sovereignty movement as a political project struggling to replace the neoliberal food regime with environmentally sustainable and democratically operated production systems. It will examine the extent to which the national peasant movements of Mexico and Ecuador, CIOAC and FENOCIN in particular, may or may not be considered as counter-hegemonic forces that challenge the political foundations of the current food regime. It will argue that the relationship between peasant movements and the state is central in shaping counter-hegemonic struggles. Analysis will focus on how peasant organisation structures, specifically the class bases, leadership, and modes of representation and interaction between the two, are central to determining not only the relative success of peasant movement struggles, but also the extent to which these struggles are, in practice, counter-hegemonic. It will also show how and why a counter-hegemonic discourse of food sovereignty is employed and adapted in response to changing political circumstances as an important political tool, even if no concrete organisational policies are in place to put food sovereignty into practice.

Focus on the structures and internal dynamics of organisations demanding counter-hegemonic transformation of society is essential not only for understanding the nature, origins and forms of expression of such demands, but also the potential of these organisations to actually contest the state and transform the existing neoliberal order. Much has been written on food sovereignty as an alternative model of food and agriculture (Rosset, 2011; Martinez-Torres & Rosset, 2012; Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011), the

contradictions within its own discourses (Patel, 2009; Agarwal, 2014), and challenges relating to its practical application (Edelman, 2014; Burnett & Murphy, 2014). However, relatively little attention has been given to the ways in which peasant organisations use the discourse of food sovereignty as a political tool in their engagements with the state. As McKay et al (2014: 1177) argue, 'food sovereignty cannot be conceived of as a finite outcome; it is a political space and terrain of struggle around control over food systems'. As we will see, different peasant organisations use their membership of the VC, and its powerful food sovereignty discourse, for very different purposes. In Mexico, CIOAC and other VC members have been neutralised as potential counter-hegemonic threats since the early 1990s by the state and its clientelist policies. Their functional dependence on the state has encouraged the use of the discourse of food sovereignty completely decoupled from any form of its practice; rather than transformation of the neoliberal food system, the discourse is invoked as a political tool aimed at defending and increasing the organisation's access to palliative state resources. However, within the restrictive conditions of neo-corporatism the use of the food sovereignty discourse is still very useful politically. It has acted as a powerful political tool that has prevented the Mexican state from completely abandoning the peasant sector even if rural organisations have taken no concrete steps to put food sovereignty into practice. In contrast, Ecuador's peasant movement - historically far more politically autonomous vis-à-vis the state compared to its Mexican counterpart - has combined a food sovereignty discourse with diverse and sustained actions for its practical implementation, culminating the inclusion of food sovereignty in the National Constitution. However, the alliance made between peasant organisations and Correa from 2006, FENOCIN in particular, has distanced organisational leadership from its bases and weakened its counter-hegemonic potential in the face of Correa's backtracking on promises to implement food sovereignty. As peasant leaders lost contact with their bases, Correa's project reached down to rural communities, gaining widespread support not only for his presidency but also his own definitions of food sovereignty which are far removed from those proposed by the national peasant movement. Nevertheless, constitutional articles pertaining to food sovereignty, written by the national peasant movement, are used by the latter as a basis for critiquing Correa's rural policies and holding him to account - a powerful political tool now that food sovereignty is enshrined in the nation's constitution.

The following section will begin by elaborating what is meant by 'the state' in the course of this chapter and outlining Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and counter-hegemony with reference to contemporary peasant organisations. The second section will look at how the

debt crisis across Latin America led to a crisis of legitimacy (hegemony) for the state in Mexico and Ecuador, reconfiguring state-peasant movement relations under neoliberalism. Following from this will be an examination of how the class bases, leadership, and modes of representation and interaction between the two within peasant organisations have shaped, and continue to shape, contemporary state-peasant movement relations in Mexico and Ecuador. It will discuss how this affects the counter-hegemonic force of the food sovereignty movement in the neoliberal era and the use of the discourse of food sovereignty as a political strategy in engagements with the state.

4.1 The State and Hegemony

Gramsci (2007: 12) defines hegemony as ‘the “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group’. A dominant class secures hegemony not by forcefully repressing antagonistic classes, but by developing ‘universalist’ discourses and institutions that attempt to project the state and the class-based interests that it defends and promotes as the ‘natural’ order of things that work in the interests of society at large. The state, designed to create favourable conditions for the ruling class’ expansion, can only foster consent for this role if ‘the dominant group is coordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups’ (Ibid: 182). In order to do so, it must balance legitimating itself to subaltern groups with the need to promote the interests of the dominant classes which cannot be applied narrowly and directly owing to the need for the former. The necessary fiction that the state transcends class distinctions can only remain credible if concessions are made to meet the most pressing needs, and accommodate some of the aspirations of, the dominated and exploited classes (Buttigieg, 1995: 13).

Dominant classes can only maintain their hegemony through the formation of a ‘historic bloc’, an agglomeration of leading social forces within a specific national context which establish a relationship over contending social forces (Bieler & Morton, 2004: 90). However, hegemony is not simply a one-way, top-down process of domination accompanied by the uncontested creation of consent, but rather an ongoing political process at all levels in which power is legitimated, contested and redefined (Mallon, 1994: 70). Hegemony cannot be reproduced without the constant, though partial, incorporation of counter-hegemony

(Ibid: 71) in the form of concessions to subaltern groups which legitimate hegemonic rule, but crucially without threatening the material basis of this rule - the model of capitalist accumulation upon which this bloc depends, at present neoliberal capitalism.

Fox's (1993: 30) analysis of the state focuses more specifically on the balancing of the interests of the ruling classes with the societal consent necessary for the former to be met in the long-term. Accordingly, analysis needs to be based on two fundamentals of state rule in capitalist society; the continuation of private capital accumulation - the material basis of the ruling class' power, reproduction and hegemony - and the preservation of some historically conditioned minimum of political legitimacy to achieve relative societal consent for state rule. The constitution and reproduction of the (capitalist) state is dependent on capital accumulation and so the state must create, develop and foster suitable conditions to promote such accumulation within its territory. The fact that work is organised on a capitalist basis means that what the state does and can do is limited and shaped by the need to maintain this system of capitalist organisation of which it is a part (Holloway, 2005: 13). However, being a capitalist state - founded and reproduced on the basis of capitalist social relations - it is therefore a class state in which power is concentrated on the basis of class relations (Poulantzas, 1980: 44). The state must therefore organise and reproduce class hegemony by establishing compromises between the dominant and dominated classes that may involve certain short term material sacrifices for the dominant classes in order that their long-term domination be reproduced. Through certain concessions to the dominated classes, the dominant classes continually strive to retain and expand their hegemony in civil society by legitimating themselves, the capitalist state itself, and the reproduction of capitalist social relations as a whole (Ibid: 184-185).

Shifts in the balance of power within civil society between different social classes and groups shape the state and its policies in terms of the relative importance attributed to accumulation and legitimation and how this is exercised and expressed. Social organisations such as CIOAC and FENOCIN attempt to wrest concessions from and shape the state and its policies/institutions through its apparatus of legitimation. As a form of capitalist social relations, the state's very existence depends on the reproduction of those relations. However, the relation between the state and the reproduction of capital is a complex one and it cannot be assumed that everything that the state does will necessarily be in the best interests of capital (Holloway, 1994: 28). As we will see in the cases of Mexico and Ecuador, historical pressures from above and below that have threatened the long term viability of

accumulation have been accompanied by reconfigurations of the apparatuses of both accumulation and legitimation in an attempt to secure the long term conditions for the former. Although both countries' peasant movements have been able to wrest significant concessions from their respective national states through mass organising, mobilisation and pressure from within the state apparatus, they have been unable to construct a significant and sustained challenge to state hegemony. This, as we will see, has been the result of the articulation between state strategies to neutralise counter-hegemony and specific organisational structures of peasant organisations - their class bases, forms of leadership and the modes of interaction between the two - that fundamentally shape the struggle for hegemony.

To bring about the transformation of the neoliberal food regime requires a shift in the balance of societal forces, a shift which necessarily requires the political strengthening of 'autonomous' peasant organisations such as CIOAC and FENOCIN vis-à-vis those forces currently reproducing the neoliberal food regime; transnational capital as the dominant strata of the global political economy and neoliberal states and their policies and ideologies that reproduce the neoliberal world order. The question therefore arises as to how hegemony can and is contested by subaltern groups, and what factors shape the relative success of peasant struggles against the state. This chapter will argue that the articulation between a state's hegemonic project and the internal structures of organisations that oppose it are critical to engaging with this question.

4.2 Neoliberal Transition and State-Peasant Movement Relations in Mexico and Ecuador

In Mexico and Ecuador the debt crisis and the implementation of SAPs led to a legitimacy crisis; the concessions made to subaltern groups during the developmentalist era in both countries had taken the form predominantly of channelling resources from the federal state to a subaltern clientele base (Ecuador) or corporatised sectors of the working class and peasantry (Mexico). The debt crisis placed severe constraints on the continuation of this system of managing social order, forcing the state to reconfigure its legitimising apparatus in order to retain its hegemony in the context of reduced federal funds, international financial institution (IFI) pressures to cut back on social spending, and mounting pressures both from above (Western liberal democracies) and below (national

popular movements) for increased democratisation (Postero & Zamosc, 2004; 10). The result in Mexico and Ecuador was the need to radically transform the state's legitimisation apparatus and practices in a way that was cheaper but no less effective than that based on the state as driver of 'development'. Concessions ceded to subaltern groups changed in nature and form, as did the relationship between the state and the peasantry to deliver them. The reconfiguration of this relationship differed significantly depending on national contexts; however, across the region's rural areas one of the generalised and fundamental changes that took place following democratic opening was the legitimacy conferred on independent peasant organisations by the state, their developing role as official interlocutors between their members and state institutions as well as administrators of state and externally financed 'development' projects, and their integration into the formal political system via alliances with political parties with which they sought to contest positions of political power through the liberalised electoral system. This fundamentally changed the nature of peasant organisation struggles and their counter-hegemonic potential.

Democratic opening provided a new basis on which to accommodate subaltern interests in an attempt to re-legitimise the state to subaltern classes as it restructured its role in capital accumulation through the implementation of neoliberal policies. Relative 'consent' was achieved through disseminating a discourse among subaltern groups that their needs could be met through engagement with the state, not opposition towards it. However, the ability of subaltern groups to continue to contest neoliberal policies following their increasing articulation with the state and incorporation into its institutional (and ideological) apparatus was challenged following democratic opening. As we will see, the meaning, practice and scope of organisational political autonomy has become blurred and increasingly challenged through engagement with the state whose central function remains the promotion of capital accumulation and not the promotion of sustainable peasant agriculture and human wellbeing at the heart of the concept of food sovereignty.

Mexico's 1992 and Ecuador's 1994 agrarian counter-reform laws were watershed moments in both countries' transition to neoliberalism. They officially terminated the state's responsibility for agrarian reform, a responsibility that had always been contingent on the constellation of social forces at different historical conjunctures and the ability of subaltern groups to force the state to fulfil its promises to redistribute land and provide services to the peasantry. In Mexico, rural social movements mobilised against the law and the drastic

cut back and elimination of rural credit programmes, agricultural subsidies and rural extension services - ongoing since the 1980s - that the law would only accelerate. The transformation of the accumulation model would require the state to radically reconfigure its legitimisation apparatus as the law represented an outright rejection of the principles of the revolution that, for 70 years previous, had guided the rhetoric and ideology - if not the practice - of PRI hegemony. As in Mexico, Ecuador's 1994 Agrarian Development Law officially ended the state's responsibility to land reform. Unlike Mexico, Ecuador's land reform had failed to resolve the massive concentration of land, power and wealth in the countryside and the immediate aftermath of the law's promulgation there was heightened class conflict over land (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2005: 142). In both cases, the internal structures of the organisations contesting the laws' implementation significantly shaped how they were contested and the state's response to organised resistance.

By the late 1980s state owned enterprises (SOEs) servicing the Mexican peasantry had come under increasing criticism from newly formed autonomous peasant organisations that had emerged and consolidated around a land-holding membership. Most were originally ejidal unions formed by the state over the developmentalist era with the aim of controlling ejidal production and marketing (Hernández, 1992: 57). During the initial phases of state withdrawal from the peasant sector these regional organisations began to seek the consolidation of peasant autonomous participation in their production units and economic management of their enterprises, namely through the modification of heavy state intervention in the ejidal sector (de la Fuente & Mackinlay, 1995: 2). In contrast to organisations like CIOAC that were founded on the land struggle, these new organisations sought a new type of relationship with the state based on consensus, support, negotiation, and peaceful conflict resolution (Ibid: 3). In 1985, 24 such organisations came together nationally to form UNORCA (National Union of Autonomous Regional Peasant Organisations) whose central concerns regarded productive issues, appropriation of ejidal surpluses, and land tenure formalisation (Ibid: 4).

UNORCA sought to radically transform the relationship between the state and the peasantry. Rather than 'independence' from the state, UNORCA proposed a relationship based on 'autonomy'. It proposed state support for the peasant sector without, however, state intervention in ejidal production, storage and marketing that had characterised the relationship over the developmentalist era and typified the Mexican state's rural corporatism through the CNC, still the most powerful peasant organisation nationally.

Through autonomous, democratic control of production and marketing UNORCA argued that the ejidal sector could be more competitive than the capitalist sector. The struggle for autonomy therefore necessarily involved the struggle for a new development model and the reform of the state (Moguel, 1992: 22)¹³.

In 1989 'The Permanent Agrarian Congress' (CAP) was formed - a UNORCA initiative to unite the peasantry in a new agrarian movement in which UNORCA's core demands would predominate. From the mid-1980s, the UNORCA-led autonomous movement had been gaining strength as a counter-hegemonic force. Democratic, autonomous peasant control of production replaced land as the principle object of the national peasant movement's demands and UNORCA's discourse began to articulate a coherent ideology and strategy to represent and unite landed producers around production in a way that the 'independent' peasant movement until that point had failed to do (Hernández, 1992: 57). The majority of Mexico's national peasant organisations, including CIOAC, joined the CAP marking a significant moment in CIOAC's history; up until that point its central focus of struggle had been for land but by 1989 the composition of its mass base was already dominated by smallholders as a result of the organisation's own struggles. Like FENOCIN in Ecuador, CIOAC had failed to adapt sufficiently to its changing class composition. The CAP provided not only the means for CIOAC to articulate emerging landed demands and refocus its struggles to reflect the new needs of its mass base; it also radically changed the nature of how these demands were presented to, and negotiated with, the state. From being an organisation built in opposition to the state and whose demands were based primarily on confrontation, land invasions and negotiations backed up by mobilisation, the CAP opened up official channels to state resources.

Following Salinas' highly controversial election 'victory', the institutionalisation of the CAP formed one aspect of Salinas' neo-corporatist strategy in the countryside aimed at cementing the legitimacy of a regime lacking the consent of wide sectors of civil society. The president also attempted to strengthen support for his regime by forging direct links between himself and rural communities, a strategy that, more recently, Rafael Correa has implemented in Ecuador as we will see below. Through the National Solidarity Programme (PRONASOL), Mexico's clientelist culture became more direct and paternalistic as resources of a number of similar state departments were concentrated in the hands of the president.

¹³ From the 1980s onwards 'autonomy' became the cry of unity between opposition and popular-democratic organisations, conceived of as rejection of political subordination but also social and economic self-administration of peasant and cooperative production (Bartra and Otero, 2008: 409).

Salinas set up municipal solidarity committees for distributing PRONASOL funds that became the major rural aid channel of the neoliberal era and a powerful vote buying tool (Bartra, 1996: 174). PRONASOL and the institutionalisation of the CAP presented an opportunity for the complete reconfiguration of the Mexican state's apparatus of hegemony while simultaneously neutralising any potential counter-hegemonic threat from below that may have emerged had the UNORCA inspired movement been left to develop autonomously from the state. By the late-1980s the relation of political forces between the state and the peasant movement had moved increasingly in favour of the latter, and represented a growing challenge to the state's attempt to abandon the peasantry to the increasingly liberalised world market. However, through engagement with the peasant movement's demands Salinas was able to restructure corporatist relations in the countryside (Hernández, 1992: 69). Seemingly conversely, it was through selective engagement with UNORCA's suggestions that Salinas consolidated the neoliberal regime by partially incorporating counter-hegemony into the hegemonic project - a necessary process for the production and reproduction of popular consent, directed by the dominant bloc, required for the ongoing legitimisation of class rule (Mallon, 1994: 71; Hunt, 1990: 310).

The state's partial incorporation of counter-hegemony took the form of 'democratic opening' that created spaces of dialogue and access to state resources for peasant organisations, and a complete overhaul of state policy for the peasant sector from an emphasis on production to one of managing the social and political consequences of neoliberal transition. Salinas appropriated UNORCA's discourse, took up its criticisms, and institutionalised the CAP not simply as an official response to growing subaltern pressure but as a strategy of reconfiguring the state's apparatus of legitimisation; the corporatist model. This would serve the PRI in two important ways. Firstly, the state could reshape the rural development paradigm away from agrarian reform in preparation for its termination in 1992 by fostering a consensus, based on UNORCA's proposals, that rural development was no longer a question of land (re)distribution, but of improving ejidal production, marketing and appropriation of economic surpluses. Secondly, an institutionalised CAP allowed the state to co-opt and subsume formerly independent peasant organisations demanding radical structural changes that could potentially threaten Salinas' neoliberal project. It attempted to not only draw a line under the land reform process but also reconfigure the ways in which peasant organisations conceived of, and organised to bring about, social change.

The initial optimism that CAP members could successfully represent their members through a new relationship with the state based on dialogue and proposal over confrontation and protest became increasingly frustrated as Salinas' regime consolidated. Organisational autonomy to self-manage dismantled SOEs and their own cooperatives were not supported by training, credit and resources. By 1991 the economic and political stability of the regime had been secured, peasant run projects lost the initiative, and policy geared toward the private sector had gained weight (Mackinlay, 2004: 136). Despite the CAP's initial strength it could not escape the corporatist political relations in which the state used its power to divide organisations and co-opt, or at least neutralise, leaders of the rural sector. CAP organisations were increasingly funded by, and eventually subordinated to, the state as this 'neo-corporatist' model developed (Ibid: 138). Having set out as a counter-hegemonic force, the CAP ended up acting as a moderating influence on the peasantry and reduced mobilisation and confrontation (de la Fuente & Mackinlay, 1995: 6). As we will see in the next section, it was unable to contest the state's failure to support the peasant sector as promised largely as a result of the way in which the relationships between the state and the 'autonomous' peasant movement had been institutionalised.

In Ecuador, the end of military rule in 1979 coincided with the country's critical level of indebtedness. The state significantly withdrew from direct intervention in the economy and the 1994 Agrarian Development Law institutionalised the core foundation of neoliberalism in the countryside - the creation of a land market and the pre-conditions for the universalisation of landed private property. The general thrust of the law, and of Ecuador's neoliberal transition in the countryside in general, was similar to Mexico. However, unlike Mexico, the Ecuadorian state needed to reconfigure the apparatus of legitimation in the context of the yet unresolved issue of the continuing massive concentration of land and wealth in the countryside. As in Mexico the peasantry would have no further productive role in the Ecuadorian economy, but the social and political consequences of its disintegration had to be managed. Whereas the Mexican state directly co-opted autonomous peasant organisations and reconstructed its hegemony on the basis of neo-corporatist relations founded on access to state social projects, the Ecuadorian state withdrew from the peasant sector and the void was filled with a proliferation of foreign funded NGOs¹⁴, international development agencies and foreign foundations at the same time that the country's political system was also liberalised. Unlike Mexico, however, this

¹⁴ See Breton 2008 for more in depth analysis of NGO proliferation and deradicalisation of class struggle in Ecuador in the neoliberal era.

strategy did not achieve relative societal consent for the neoliberal accumulation model as evidenced by widespread social protests and popular uprisings that overthrew two presidents over the course of the 1980s and into the 2000s.

The first national indigenous uprising took place in June 1990 in response primarily to deteriorating economic conditions, especially in the Andean countryside. It was led by CONAIE (The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) in the Sierra and involved tens of thousands of indigenous protestors, including FENOCIN organisations, blocking roads and mass marching in regional capitals. The protest was called off when president Borja agreed to open dialogue with indigenous protestors on the issues raised by CONAIE; namely the economic situation and land conflicts (Zamosc, 1994: 38). However, the government's response failed to resolve the demands of the indigenous peasantry and CONAIE convoked the second national indigenous uprising in June 1994 as a response to the implementation of Ecuador's agrarian counter-reform law that same year. Again, FENOCIN participated. According to Guerrero (1997: 86) the main achievement of the 1994 uprising was the definitive legitimisation of an indigenous discourse and a form of representation with the state. Unlike the 1990 uprising which had been called off following government promises to respond to demands, the 1994 event demanded dialogue with the government regarding the counter-reform law in an attempt to ensure that the government could not renege on its promises. This dialogue, protracted over the course of one month, was ultimately unsuccessful in terms of changing the law. However, it was hugely important in conferring state legitimacy on the indigenous movement and wider societal credibility to their demands (Martinez Valle, 2003: 89). In order to coordinate this dialogue rural organisations, led by CONAIE, united to form the 'National Agrarian Coordinator' (CAN). Like the CAP in Mexico on its formation, this grouping became the most important national space of convergence for organisations defending the survival of peasant farming, often in combination with indigenous rights over territory (Muñoz, 2010: 151-152).

The political emergence of indigeneity at the centre of a counter-hegemonic movement generated new forms of social and political participation within the context of the failure of representative democracy and political parties to adequately address the needs of the indigenous peasantry following SAP implementation. The opening of spaces of dialogue within the state apparatus represented a new form of direct representation for groups that had previously depended on political parties, mobilisations and confrontational tactics to

get their demands heard. Decision making positions within the state and political parties opened up for these organisations' leaders who, in turn, moved from strategies based on protest and confrontation to tactics based on 'critical engagement' and proposal. However, as we will see in more detail below, the internal structures of Ecuador's peasant organisations and the distinct state strategies to engage with them allowed the former to retain their political autonomy and continue to contest neoliberalism as a counter-hegemonic force, unlike their Mexican counterparts.

By the mid-1990s the indigenous-peasant movement had emerged as the major force for social change in Ecuador and represented a serious threat to the country's political regime and the neoliberal model. It had won over many societal allies with an agenda that subsumed ethnic demands to the wider goal of challenging the neoliberal accumulation model. In 1997 it overthrew the presidency of Abdalá Bucaram, forced a constitutive assembly in 1998, and again overthrew the Mahuad government in 2000 for failure to tackle the economic crisis and indigenous/peasant impoverishment stemming from, in its view, the neoliberal model. However, the movement would end up being a victim of its own success and the political strategy it followed at the height of its power.

The indigenous movement, FENOCIN included, supported the presidential campaign of former general Lucio Gutierrez in the run up to the 2002 national elections. His platform of reversing neoliberal policies and tackling corruption led him to the presidency and for the first time the Ecuadorian social movement had the possibility of participating in government (Davalos, 2003: 5). Gutierrez's electoral victory was viewed as a victory for the Left and greeted with a sense of optimism across the region - it seemed that the neoliberal agenda across Latin American could be effectively challenged from below (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2005: 136). However, his electoral campaign was not based on any specific programmatic plan or ideology. He used the support of the social movements to rise to power and then reneged on the promises he had made to reverse neoliberal policies and support movement initiatives and proposals. Two CONAIE leaders were appointed to government office and other prominent members of the same organisation were given various public posts. Gutierrez also channelled state resources to indigenous-peasant organisations, including FENOCIN, but their decision making capacity was severely constrained by the administration's general policy and power structure. Contrary to its rhetoric, Gutierrez privileged IMF and other IFI 'obligations' over a policy of productive national investment to reactivate the economy. In response to this perceived betrayal,

FENOCIN and CONAIE withdrew their support from government after just six months in office and the latter resigned from all government posts (Ibid: 158). Contrary to the movement's beliefs and similar to the experience of CIOAC and the CAP in Mexico, incorporation into the state's hegemonic apparatus in an attempt to influence state policy from within had not only failed to bring about the desired changes; it had weakened the movement and its capacity to challenge the state and the neoliberal accumulation model that it was expanding and deepening. The indigenous movement's alliance with Gutierrez had profound repercussions on the organisations that had supported him. It severely damaged their image as an 'alternative' political force (Lalander & Ospina, 2012: 20) and grassroots bases, the wider peasantry, and the general population blamed the indigenous movement for right wing policies (Davalos, 2006: 62). It was not until 2006 and the indigenous-peasant movement's critical role in Correa's rise to the presidency that it would once again represent a serious counter-hegemonic threat to the neoliberal order, although, as we will see, this threat has been heavily challenged by the very government it helped bring to power.

4.3 The Food Sovereignty Movement in Mexico and Ecuador: A Counter-Hegemonic Movement?

In order to assess both the counter-hegemonic potential of the food sovereignty movement in Mexico and Ecuador, and the use of food sovereignty discourse as a political strategy, the relationship between the state and peasant movements must be analysed. To do so, the structures of CIOAC and FENOCIN will be examined on the basis of the compositions and interests of the mass bases of both organisations, their leaderships, and the modes of interaction and representation between these elements. This corresponds to Gramsci's (2007: 152) model for the modern Prince in which, he states, three fundamental elements must converge for the creation and development of a counter-hegemonic force to lead the intellectual and moral reform of civil society as the basis for a new state and economic system; a) 'a mass element', the mass bases of CIOAC and FENOCIN in our case; b) 'the principle cohesive element', both organisations' leaderships; and c) 'an intermediate element which articulates the first element with the second and maintains contact between them physically, morally and intellectually'. This element will here refer to the modes of interaction between the leadership and the bases, i.e. accountability and forms of representation.

In their interactions with the state all three elements, and so too an organisations' struggles and counter-hegemonic force, are continually re-shaped. We saw in chapter two how CIOAC and FENOCIN's struggles for land reform reconfigured the class constellations of their mass bases. Of particular importance for the food sovereignty movement is the role of leaders in organising and shaping the demands and interests of their bases into a coherent and effective political strategy that is capable of bringing about the structural transformation of the neoliberal food regime. For CIOAC and FENOCIN, we saw in chapter three how the interests of their members in the present conjuncture are guided by struggles for autonomy from and within the market. Leaders, or 'intellectuals' in Gramsci's terminology, are critical for constructing and framing counter-hegemonic ideology and guiding counter-hegemonic practice. Central to this, on the one side, is the strategy of the state in attempting to neutralise, bypass or selectively incorporate counter-hegemonic leaders into its own hegemonic project for the purpose of legitimation. On the other are the bases themselves and forms of representation and accountability between leaders and members which can either inhibit the state's strategy through embedding leaders in their organisations (e.g. 'popular democratic' organisations [Otero, 2004a]), or encourage it if leaders and their decision making power are relatively autonomous from those they represent (i.e. more 'authoritarian' or hierarchical, organisations).

The literature on the food sovereignty movement tends to assume that, in the words of Carroll & Ratner, (2010: 8) 'contemporary social movements are, *prima facie*, agents of counter-hegemony in their organised dissent to the existing order'. According to McMichael (2008: 225), 'the food sovereignty movement fundamentally challenges the institutional relations of neoliberal capitalism...paradoxically reproducing the peasantry as an 'unthinkable' social force, as a condition of its emergence as a radical world-historical subject'. This claim tacitly assumes the existence and exercise of counter-hegemony as a precondition for transforming the existing neoliberal food regime, while failing to address the role of the institutions promoting this regime in shaping and constraining the political terrain on which peasant organisations operate and their capacity to retain and practice counter-hegemony. A focus on discourse alone, without an examination of organisational practices, can easily lead to the misrepresentation or overestimation of the food sovereignty movement's counter-hegemonic potential. This highlights another problem symptomatic of not only the literature on food sovereignty but also that of social movements in general; a failure to critically examine the relationship between movement leaders and those they represent. As Edelman (1999: 185) points out, a relatively

unproblematic view is taken of how organising takes place, tending to assume high levels of agreement between aspirations of leaders and grassroots participants. Most scholars have accepted uncritically leaders' downplaying of their own impact and their related efforts to represent movements as spontaneous expressions of popular discontent. A notable exception is Otero (2004a) whose theory of political class formation proposes that three key factors - regional cultures, state intervention and leadership types - mediate between class structural processes and political outcome in the political formation of class (the process by which groups, classes and communities define their demands, construct organisations to defend and promote their interests, and establish alliances with other organisations [Ibid: 41]). Despite the great deal of overlap between political class formation and the construction and exercise of counter-hegemony, the two are not necessarily synonymous. Instead, I will suggest that the construction and exercise of counter-hegemony for Mexico and Ecuador's food sovereignty movement is similarly shaped by state intervention, but also by the three internal elements to subaltern organisations suggested by Gramsci that must converge for the development of a counter-hegemonic force.

4.4 Organisational Structures and Counter-Hegemony in Mexico's Food Sovereignty Movement

The institutionalisation of the CAP and the consolidation of Salinas' regime in the 1990s saw the neo-corporatised peasant movement unable to prevent market-promoting public policies that forced the ruin of rural Mexico, the extension and deepening immiseration of the social sector and mass out-migration from the countryside to urban informal sectors both within Mexico and abroad, the US especially (Bartra, 2004: 23). The national peasant movement's weakness was founded on its own organisational structures and the political culture in rural Mexico on which the state's hegemonic strategy reconstructed itself to consolidate both itself and the neoliberal model.

CIOAC is a peasant 'central' that mimics the hierarchical structures of the PRI's corporatist organisations; community or ejido groups form local committees which are then grouped as regional organisations. Regional organisations are, in turn, subsumed under state followed by national level committees. Each level of organisation consists of a committee, or

leadership group, whose structure is shared across all levels of the organisation. For example, local organisational presidents are subordinate to regional presidents and so on up to the level of national president where maximum authority rests. Power is centralised in the national leadership committee where organisational policies and actions are designed and put into practice via directives that are transmitted from the top down (Herrera, 1998: 172). This centralised organisational structure and Mexican political culture are mutually constitutive and continue to shape the national peasant movement and its capacity to construct counter-hegemonic organisations. Non-democratic, 'cacique' based power relations predominate at all levels and are characterised by dynastic family and kinship based leadership structures.

The corporatist relations developed by the PRI through the CNC were imbued with authoritarian, patrimonial and patron-client traits. A political culture in which leaders considered organisations their own property and personal appropriation and distributional discretion of material resources became both a norm and socially accepted among the bases for PRI-affiliated groups. Ejidos created under agrarian reform were politically controlled by the PRI which organised the internal affairs of ejidos through designation and sponsoring of 'comisariados ejidales' - local strongmen and their power groups that were responsible for administering federal resources and social welfare programmes in return for social and political control of their populations (Mackinlay & Otero, 2004: 77-80). 'Independent' organisations such as CIOAC, whose struggles had won land for their members from the 1970s to the 1990s, implemented the same internal ejidal structures as those created by the PRI and a centralised, pyramidal power structure encouraged the establishment of patron-client relations.

The culture of corporatism and the clientelist practices that it enshrines continue to have deep roots in Mexican society and shape not only the state's strategies of social control but also the struggles, expectations and conception of how politics is 'done' of CIOAC's members, their leaders, and the Mexican peasantry in general. Following the institutionalisation of the CAP, CIOAC's centralist structure increasingly became a mechanism of resource channelling from federal government in return for leaders' social and political control of the organisation's mass base. Critical to this control was active support for Salinas' official termination of agrarian reform and relative 'consent' for the state's application of neoliberal policies. This 'consent' is a relative, highly complex notion and its understanding requires analytical separation between a subaltern organisation's

discourse and practice. CIOAC's leaders constantly renounce neoliberalism and demand food sovereignty with an official organisational discourse that consistently rejects neoliberal policies. However, in practice, as we will see, the organisation has become dependent on, and subordinate to, the state's apparatus of legitimation in a way that severely restricts its ability to actively contest the neoliberalism it discursively rejects. Nevertheless, CIOAC's use of the discourse of food sovereignty - constructed on the rejection of the neoliberal model and the destruction it has wrought on the organisation's membership - is a valuable political tool in its negotiations with the state. CIOAC's membership of the VC and the influential food sovereignty principles it articulates provides an emotive set of discourses to mobilise its bases against a state implicated in the defence and promotion of neoliberalism. CIOAC uses this to wrest material concessions from the state, even if these concessions do not seek transformation of the existing model despite the organisation's stated demands.

The majority of writers that work on the Mexican peasant movement look at how its member organisations lost their political autonomy under Salinas' 'neo-corporatist' project, de-radicalised their demands and strategies, and became legitimators of state policy in return for access to state resources (Bartra & Otero, 2008a; Grammont, 1993; Mackinlay, 1996; de la Fuente & Mackinlay 1995). However, these analyses fail to adequately engage with why the organisations' leaders opted to cede a degree of political autonomy in return for spaces within the state bureaucracy, access to state resources and recognition as legitimate state interlocutors for their members. This involved a move away from confrontational tactics and towards a policy of 'critical engagement' with the Mexican state. This strategy was not simply the result of the latter's neo-corporatist strategy applied from above, but was also significantly shaped by the class dynamics of the autonomous movements' mass bases and organisational structures in place to represent and channel interests and demands. CIOAC's altered class composition from landless to predominantly landed peasants struggling for autonomy changed not only the nature of their demands but also their forms of expression and how they were to be presented to state institutions. This has had serious implications for how CIOAC's leaders represent their members' demands and the ever present difficulty of balancing the need to meet the immediate material needs of their members (through engagement with the state's legitimacy apparatus), many in a constant state of subsistence crisis, while at the same time pushing for longer-term structural changes to eradicate the causes of this crisis (counter-hegemonic struggles contesting neoliberalism as the material basis of the ruling class' hegemony).

During the land reform era CIOAC's hierarchical structure extended itself across various regions and crystallised as a vanguardist organisation founded on the struggle for socialism, closely tied to the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), and manifested in the countryside as the struggle for land by landless peasants and agricultural workers. From the organisation's emergence (as the CCI) in 1961, leading figures in the PCM dominated the organisation's leadership structures. Urban 'traditional' intellectuals, these leaders sought rural support through targeted insertion into rural areas they perceived to be ripe for socialist organising. According to Gramsci (2007: 3) 'organic intellectuals', such as community leaders that CIOAC's national leadership sought to incorporate into the organisation, are essential for the construction and development of counter-hegemony; their 'function is to direct the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong'. However, CIOAC's hierarchical organisational structure, non-democratically elected leadership and its vanguardist nature tended to draw organic intellectuals vertically into its ranks and compromise the 'organic' relationship between leaders and led. Once land had been won, the revolutionary discourse of land expropriation and redistribution continued but increasingly failed to reflect the interests of a growing landed mass base. The non-democratic nature of the organisation and its centralised structure meant that landed members could do little to re-shape CIOAC's land redistribution discourse emanating from above, from leaders that grounded their strategies on the international struggle for socialism. It was not until the late 1980s that external factors; the fall of the Berlin Wall and the international crisis of the Left, the rise of neoliberalism, and Salinas' project to reconfigure the Mexican state, combined with the internal issue of the organisation's now predominantly landed mass base to both force CIOAC's leaders, as well as provide them with a seeming opportunity (through the UNORCA inspired CAP), to reshape the nature of their discourse, demands and political strategy.

Salinas' institutionalisation of the CAP led to the widespread belief among CIOAC's leaders that the immediate material needs of a newly emerging class of small landholders struggling for autonomy could more conceivably be achieved by the organisation through working with the reconfigured state, not in opposition towards it. Political liberalisation not only opened up this opportunity - more importantly it seemed more conceivable, and a more effective political strategy, for peasant leaders to seek spaces and influence within the state apparatus to meet these emerging needs than a strategy based on remaining on the outside. This view was further encouraged by electoral reforms that began in 1977 by conferring legal status on the PCM that had previously been banned from participating in

electoral politics. Democratisation of the electoral system was used to accommodate subaltern interests into the hegemonic project and foster a belief among subaltern groups that their interests could be fully represented through a democratic electoral system. This strategy, combined with CIOAC and other Mexican peasant organisation's non-democratic structures, would continue the process of deradicalisation that Salinas instigated with the CAP, further distancing counter-hegemonic discourse from actual practice. CIOAC's leadership underwent what Gramsci termed 'transformismo' as a result of the articulation of the state's reconfiguration of hegemony with an organisation whose leadership's decision making was relatively autonomous from its bases.

For Gramsci, 'transformismo' refers to the movement of left-wing radicals and intellectuals into the 'enemy' camp, or hegemonic apparatus (Gramsci, 2007: 157). That the state should be interested in incorporating organised dissent into its ideological apparatus is not surprising; by physically incorporating peasant leaders into the Mexican state, and partially (i.e. in ways that do not threaten the fundamental basis of its hegemony - the neoliberal accumulation model) incorporating counter-hegemonic discourse, the ruling class reproduces its hegemony through selective incorporation of counter-hegemony. In terms of the CAP, CIOAC in particular, 'transformismo' of the entire national, state, and even regional leadership structures took place. Leaders at all levels accepted the termination of agrarian reform. However, more fundamentally, 'transformismo' of CIOAC's leaders led to the reconfiguration of the organisation from a counter-hegemonic group demanding land and contesting state hegemony and the accumulation model it promoted and defended, to an organisation based on soliciting resources from the state's reconfigured legitimisation apparatus without contesting the very nature of that apparatus; the state's hegemony itself. The extracts below, taken from interviews with CIOAC leaders in Las Margaritas, Chiapas, demonstrate this 'transformismo' through the leadership's change in focus and the organisational consensus around the end agrarian reform.

'At the beginning the struggle was for land. There was a lot of government repression...many died and many went to prison. Now we have experienced a change of focus. Now it's the struggle for power and we have achieved many deputies, representatives, etcetera at the state and federal level. Now the struggle is for the development of our communities - roads, electricity, drinking water...The land question is not going to be able to continue in this zone because of Salinas and article 27. Now there's no possibility of soliciting land...Now, since we can't solicit land, what we do is solicit projects so that our people can buy land. We carry on the pacific struggle'. Roberto Alfonso, a founder of CIOAC in Las Margaritas and member of its municipal leadership committee (11 October 2012, Las Margaritas, Chiapas).

'We knock on government doors...and seek solutions to ejido and community demands...If they don't finance us, we pressure municipal, state and federal government. We mobilise under a mark of respect. This way we've resolved many of the needs of our membership. This way we've advanced...we speak with the government and get resources'. **Recording of Luis Hernandez Cruz, CIOAC leader in Las Margaritas speaking in Ejido Emiliano Zapata, Municipality La Independencia, Chiapas, on 1 September 2012.**

CIOAC's organisational structure, its modes of representation and accountability between leadership and bases, were certainly key elements that explain the scale of 'transformismo' over the neoliberal era. As Otero (2004a: 17-18) states, democratic leadership organisations have greater possibilities of retaining their independence from the state and establishing popular-democratic alliances with other organisations than non-democratic organisations. The more democratic their leaders, and the more participative their decision making mechanisms, the more probable an organisation will become popular-democratic (Ibid: 225) and therefore be able to resist leadership cooptation and a loss of political autonomy, and retain and expand a counter-hegemonic programme. However, it is neither sufficient analytically or fair on the organisations themselves to blame corporatist political culture, embedded clientelist practices and corrupt, undemocratically elected peasant leaders as the only causes of deradicalisation and the end of counter-hegemonic struggle (although they are without doubt major factors). As we saw above, the need for leaders to respond to the demands of their (now mainly landed) bases, even in centralised peasant organisations, should not be underestimated, nor the opportunities that seemed to present themselves when the CAP was at its zenith and, for the first time, it seemed conceivable that the state was genuinely in favour of peasant organisation 'autonomy' and a renewed basis for state-peasant movement relations. However, the relative autonomy enjoyed by CIOAC's leaders from their bases accelerated processes of 'transformismo' as participation in formal electoral politics became ever more important for the organisation's strategy. Electoral campaigns were decided upon by the leadership without the consultation of their bases and as the former became ever more submerged in official politics the links between them and their communities were weakened further.

By channelling resources to individual organisations - either directly through the CAP or through municipal, state and national electoral positions won by CIOAC in alliance with the PRD (*Partido de la Revolución Democrática*) political party - the state managed to divide the peasant movement. Leaders became ever more distanced from their bases at all levels as their struggles for power within the state apparatus came to dominate political strategy.

Leaders at the national level increasingly devoted their efforts to negotiating resources and projects with high level state officials in Mexico City and channelling them down to be administered by their state and regional level organisations. As a result the struggle for structural changes put forward by the CAP - end to state promotion and subsidy of private capitalist production, more resources for the peasant sector, subsidised credit etc. - became increasingly decoupled from meeting the short-term material demands of the membership which sought access to the resource channels opened up to (and by) their organisation. Members' struggles for autonomy from and within the market were addressed by CIOAC predominantly on an individual basis, articulating with the state's own strategy of distributing palliative resources at the household level as a means of dampening rural unrest. Rather than developing a bottom-up collective political strategy based on members' struggles for autonomy in order to tackle the causes of the agrarian crisis, access to state resources were used to deal with its symptoms.

The opening up of resource channels between CIOAC's leaders and federal government and state institutions led to the fragmentation and atomisation of the mass base and members' reconceptualisation of their organisation from one struggling on a collective basis for the right to land, to a more strategic relationship based on individual (household) access to state funds. The lack of participatory decision making structures and grassroots involvement in the ideological construction of a new unifying counter-hegemonic programme left CIOAC unable to construct a coherent, bottom up strategy to represent members' struggles to make a viable and dignified living from the land. To construct and retain counter-hegemony requires subaltern organisations to develop an independent socio-cultural and political consciousness and this is only possible in democratic organisations in which leaders are embedded in their bases and held accountable to the latter. There must be, in the words of Gramsci (2007: 188-189) 'a matching of thrust from below with orders from above, a continuous insertion of elements thrown up from the depths of the rank and file into the solid frameworks of the leadership apparatus which ensures continuity and the regular accumulation of experience'. This was increasingly not the case as the focus of CIOAC's leaders on struggles within the state (hegemonic) apparatus took growing precedence over work in grassroots communities, especially with regard to political organising and channelling of members' demands into a coherent political strategy aimed at transforming their situation, rather than dealing with its symptoms through access to state resources.

'The great majority of (peasant) organisation militants are now focused on what they hope to receive from government programmes, or on electoral processes. This, I say, has diverted the structure, the objectives, the spirit and practices of the social organisations that we knew 30 years ago'. Emilio Plutarco Garcia, founding member of CNPA and member of the organisation's national council (15 February 2013, Xochitepec, Morelos).

The reconceptualisation of CIOAC from a radical organisation that collectively struggled for land and worker control of the means of production, and an entity central to the lives of its members and the formation of their beliefs and values, to one whose primary function is instrumental - access to state resources - is evidenced especially by generational differences between those that struggled for land and more recent members that view CIOAC as a link to state resources. Both extracts below - the first from a CIOAC member in Oaxaca, the other from the organisation's leader in that state - highlight the strategic, material based relationship that most of CIOAC's members have with their organisation. CIOAC's presence in Oaxaca dates from the mid-1980s and it has never been involved in land struggles. Its work has always been closely tied to electoral politics and (from 1989) a close working relationship with the PRD. CIOAC's leader in Oaxaca has both built on, and further encouraged, clientelist relations for vote buying purposes. This has manifested itself as a demobilised membership (CIOAC has never mobilised its members in Oaxaca) with an instrumental relationship to the organisation.

(Me) How have you gained from being a part of CIOAC?

I've only got fertiliser. Others have received chickens, housing, shops. But after receiving the help many leave.

(Me) Is this problem going to increase with Mario's (state CIOAC leader) position as congressman?

A lot of people, yes, will want to join because he's become congressman. It's going to attract more people with a strategic vision. We ourselves have been in the organisation a long time. Others stay two or three months for a project then leave. It's a problem of raising the consciousness (concientización) of the people - CIOAC lacks this'. Simón Martínez , CIOAC member in the municipality of Zimatlan, Oaxaca (9 December 2012, Zimatlan).

'To all the new members, I want to tell you that yes, we have three years with me as congressman but CIOAC carries on working afterwards. As members we have rights and obligations because this happens; groups leave and join one organisation then another looking for resources'. Mario Rafael Méndez, PRD Congressman and CIOAC Oaxaca's General Secretary in a state assembly of CIOAC Oaxaca with municipal CIOAC leaders, (3 December 2012, Oaxaca City).

In contrast to Oaxaca, many of CIOAC's members in Chiapas and Guerrero occupy land won as a result of their own struggles. Much of the older generation were formed in the land struggle and their relationship with CIOAC goes far beyond material resources. As Holloway (2005: 208) notes, for people involved in strikes and similar activities, the most important outcome of the struggles is often not the realisation of immediate demands, but the development of a community of struggle, a collective doing characterised by opposition to capitalist social relations. This was certainly the case for CIOAC's land struggling peasants that gained not only instrumentally in terms of land access as a result of their struggles as CIOAC, but also collectively in immeasurable ways from the experience of struggle itself. The extract below demonstrates this, while also showing how more recently recruited members have a more strategic relationship with CIOAC as a result of its now overwhelming focus on electoral politics and accessing federal resources.

'I believe in CIOAC, it's part of the people (pueblo). They helped us fight for the land here and because of this we have our community. I'm with CIOAC for what they have brought us here, but some don't have the feeling of solidarity with CIOAC, just a strategic relationship because they think they will gain the most with them. That's why they left when the PRI came back with their promises and their return to power in the municipality'. Gilberto Absalom, CIOAC member in the community of Paredon (1 October 2012, Jitotol, Chiapas).

A core element of the Mexican state's response to the 1994 Zapatista uprising was its attempt to extend and deepen corporatist relations with peasant organizations, such as CIOAC, that had not eschewed contact with the state but instead continued to seek negotiations and presence within its structures. From its origins, the EZLN has struggled for a transformation of the relationships between rulers and ruled as a way to transcend capitalist social relations (Vergrá-Camus, 2014). Unlike all previous guerrilla movements in Latin America, the EZLN does not seek state power directly. Instead it struggles to organise and strengthen subaltern organisations and classes within civil society in an attempt to transform the state and the capitalist social relations on which it is founded (Otero, 2004b: 336-337). Its programme of local autonomy is not seen as a counterweight to state power, but instead aims to make that power superfluous through the creation of its own political and juridical spaces - founded on control of territory - so that people can practice their own way of life and government (Esteva, 1997: 15). The movement attempts to transform Mexico through the progressive construction of political spaces in which effective governance can happen, within a truly democratic society (Ibid: 20).

In the immediate aftermath of the uprising the EZLN attempted to build bridges between the PRD and construct a broad class alliance with civil society allies, including CIOAC. The latter supported the EZLN, even though they disagreed with the use of arms. However, this alliance was effectively terminated in 1996 when the state and federal government began signing individual agreements with independent peasant organisations that legalised their land occupations. The relationship between the EZLN and peasant organisations that retain relations with the state has effectively been non-existent ever since¹⁵. The EZLN's political strategy of strengthening civil society vis-à-vis the state (Otero, 2004b: 337) is based on retaining the organisation's independence from the state, not increasing integration into it as the majority of Mexico's peasant organisations strive to do. As Vergara-Camus (2014: 275) states, 'For the Zapatistas, the opportunity of leading a "radical agrarian historical bloc" in Chiapas was lost to the far longer-standing capacity of the state to co-opt peasant organisations'.

The uprising led to the flooding in of central government funds to support rival peasant organisations that had not rejected contact with the state, but on the contrary were looking to exert greater influence on the state through formal channels. It also increased the 'fairness' of local elections, significantly levelling the playing field for non-PRI candidates in the hope of cutting support for the EZLN, preventing a major insurrection, and encouraging dissent to be expressed through formal means (Trejo, 2012: 15). This weakened the EZLN, many of whose members (with pressing material needs) returned to or joined peasant organizations that were now receiving a growing quantity of state resources channelled to their members and gaining presence in municipal governments. It also increased CIOAC and other independent peasant organisations' dependence on the state and participation in electoral politics.

The reconfiguration of the state's legitimating apparatus in the countryside had effectively converted formerly radical, oppositional organisations such as CIOAC into allies of state legitimating institutions and administrators of their projects and resources. It altered the relationship between grassroots members and their organisations whose leaders became ever more integrated into the state (hegemonic) apparatus via electoral politics and the development of a close working relationship with the state's institutions of legitimation. This acted not only to neutralise and incorporate a counter-hegemonic threat; resources and also peasant organisation leaders' (growing) incomes came to depend ever more on

¹⁵ For a more in-depth analysis of the Zapatista's political strategy see Vergara-Camus, 2014.

the insertion they could achieve within state legitimating institutions and electoral positions which, in turn, depended on managing the social unrest of their own bases. It also served to legitimate state policy to reconfigure the accumulation model in a way that would destroy the basis of the peasant economy and pave the way for the generalisation and deepening of capitalist social relations in the Mexican countryside.

'As social organisations we have been a factor in controlling various things that could have caused big problems in this country...We have been part of the control of people's anger, of movements and more dangerous things. The government has wanted to control this with projects, state resources, across the whole country...This is how it works with the handouts, which are palliatives for poverty but at the same time they become an instrument of control'. **José Dolores López Barrios, CIOAC's national secretary (29 January 2013, Mexico City).**

Rather than organisations autonomously administering peasant production, they became channels for administering palliative anti-poverty projects to maintain social control in the countryside in the context of the neoliberal attack on the peasant economy, growing crises of reproduction, and the disintegration of the peasantry itself. The resources these organisations receive and channel to their membership have become dependent on maintaining the status quo, i.e. agreement with the official discourse that the land reform era had come to its natural conclusion and that 'rural development' is now a question of productive efficiency rather than one of redistribution and can be achieved through the palliative projects being targeted at rural communities. The deradicalisation of struggles and organisations' complicity in managing for the state their own bases in return for federal funds is inextricably related to another key component of the neoliberal state's reconfiguration of hegemony; electoral reform and peasant movement participation in electoral politics.

By the mid-1980s most CIOAC community leaders across Mexico had enrolled in parties that succeeded the PCM - firstly the PSUM (the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico) and then, in 1989, the PRD which formed through the merging of various smaller left-wing parties and a section of the PRI in 1989. The CIOAC-PRD alliance became a powerful actor in municipal politics in Chiapas in particular, where from the mid-1990s onwards, through success in municipal elections, the organisation was able to bring life-changing improvements to its members.

'In 1996 I was named municipal president. Because of this we could access more resources and the communities that didn't have anything were provided with many things - classrooms, electricity, roads, housing, drinkable water'. **Miguel González Hernández, CIOAC leader and former municipal president in Jitotol, Chiapas (6 November 2012, Tuxtla Gutierrez).**

'Before CIOAC came here around 20 years ago it was PRI and we had nothing. Absolutely nothing. CIOAC brought lighting, housing materials and money to pay builders, also some coffee plants a year ago... also they brought us roads, schools, none of which we ever had before'. **Daniel Díaz Pérez, CIOAC member in the village of Amate (30 September 2012, Amate, Jitotol, Chiapas).**

The significant benefits derived from participation in electoral politics, however, came with a heavy cost in terms of CIOAC's political autonomy and its role as an organisation pushing for radical social and structural change - the kind of organisation needed in the struggle for food sovereignty. An organisation pushing for radical social transformation must balance meeting the immediate material needs of the grassroots base with the struggle for structural changes that tackle the root cause of these needs. In the case of CIOAC, the latter have predominated in discourse only, with the former having come to completely dominate the organisation's strategy in practice. CIOAC's increased focus on electoral politics from the late 1980s onwards, embedded as it was (and still is) in a clientelist political culture, and without a coherent, unifying discourse that not only represented its now marginalised landed mass base but also originated from dialogue with this base, further shifted organisational practice towards meeting the immediate material demands of its members within the existing hegemonic apparatus and away from practices that questioned the very causes of these needs and proposing (necessarily) counter-hegemonic solutions. This has been accompanied by further distancing of leaders from their bases and accelerated processes of 'transformismo' as leaders, relatively autonomous from their bases, seek to further their own political careers with the votes of their organisation's members.

'The problem is that the majority of our colleagues that have been deputies have limited themselves to this and end up distancing themselves from the organisation. They continue their political career and become distanced from their bases... Few are those that return to work with the bases and try to reduce the dependence of the organisation on official resources - something that really affects autonomy'. **Emilio Plutarco Garcia, founding member of CNPA and part of the organisation's national council (15 February 2013, village of Atlacholoaya, municipality Xochitepec, Morelos).**

CIOAC's increasingly close relationship with the PRD, which is permeated and controlled by political and economic elites, clientelist, vote-buying practices, and has no serious proposals to transform the existing neoliberal food regime, does not correspond to the organisation's

stated central goal of achieving a food sovereign Mexico and revolutionising production and power relations in the countryside. However, as stated earlier, this goal is largely rhetorical, a pragmatic political discourse employed to access and defend CIOAC's access to state resources. Vicente Fox's election to the presidency in 2000, and his administration's attempt to cut all state obligations to the rural social sector, was contested by a peasant movement ideologically guided by food sovereignty. The way that different organisations interpreted the meaning of food sovereignty and how its discourse was employed by distinct groups within the movement highlight the importance of analysing food sovereignty as a political strategy, not only as an alternative model to the neoliberal food regime.

4.5 '*El Campo No Aguanta Mas*' (The Countryside Can't Take Any More)

The defeat of the PRI in Mexico's 2000 national elections and Fox's victory as a PAN (National Action Party) candidate marked the start of a new era in Mexico's political history following 70 years of PRI monopoly. Soon after taking office Fox acted on the promises of his electoral campaign to do away with PRI corporatism and the neo-corporatist strategies that it had spawned. The new agricultural secretary withdrew financial support for the CAP in an attempt to further distance peasant organisations from negotiations with the state. Instead, the PAN government turned to TNCs, dynamic national capitalist producer sectors and agribusiness organisations such as the National Agricultural Council as principal interlocutors with the state. For peasant organisations this was an attempt by the state to break all ties (and responsibilities) with the peasantry in its goal of promoting capitalist efficiency in the countryside (Grammont & Mackinlay, 2006: 55). The national peasant movement responded with mass mobilisations and a coherent anti-neoliberal discourse which, on the surface, appeared to be converging into a counter-hegemonic movement representing a major challenge to Fox's neoliberal policies. However, as we will see, the organisational structures and embedded political culture, especially among the movement's peasant centrals, would demonstrate that their counter-hegemonic rhetoric based around the food sovereignty discourse was ultimately a political strategy founded on the defence of state corporatism, not in practice a counter-hegemonic movement for social and structural transformation.

The CAP united with other national and regional peasant organisations in November 2002 to contest the withdrawal of its financing, the worsening economic situation for the mass of Mexico's peasantry and the imminent liberalisation of 12 agricultural commodities in accordance with NAFTA that would deepen the rural crisis. These organisations, 12 in total, made a public declaration published in the national press titled 'The Countryside Can't Take Anymore: Six Proposals for the Salvation and Revaluation of the Mexican Countryside' (MECAM). In synthesis, these proposals demanded:

1. A moratorium on the agricultural chapter of NAFTA
2. An immediate programme for 2003 to deal with the rural crisis and a longer term plan for 2020
3. A total restructuring of rural financing
4. Budget assignment of 1.5% of GDP for productive development, and 1.5% for social and environmental development of the rural sector in 2003.
5. Guaranteed food health and safety policies for Mexican consumers
6. Recognition of the rights and culture of indigenous peoples (ANEC, personal correspondence)

On 31 January 2003 the group mobilised its bases and over 100 thousand people descended on Mexico City's main square demanding response to their proposals, first and foremost that basic agricultural goods - namely corn and beans - be removed from NAFTA. With demand making no longer institutionalised and controlled by the state through clientelist channels, an emerging counter-hegemonic discourse rejecting NAFTA and demanding increased state intervention in favour of the peasantry rapidly gained strength. This was backed up with mobilisational tactics including the occupation of state institutions across the country. Freed (against their wishes) from subordination to the state's client channels, for the first time since the CAP's initiation in 1989 the national peasant movement was constructing a programme that fundamentally questioned the existing neoliberal model and proposed structural solutions to the immiseration that it had wrought on the countryside. The economic conditions that triggered MECAM - NAFTA's opening of borders that brought the fall of internal prices, lack of markets for native products and the generalised ruin of all but the most capitalised rural classes (Rubio, 2003: 1) - combined with the administration's attempt to cut corporatist ties with the CAP to trigger the most powerful national peasant movement in over a decade. It is no coincidence that Fox's efforts to eliminate the CAP forced the national peasant movement into a position that

resulted in its strengthening. A social actor's capacity to disrupt political or economic stability is fundamental to its relative bargaining power (Fox, 1993: 25). Institutionalised in the CAP, the peasant movement's access to resources was fundamentally based on the opposite principle of retaining such stability in order to bargain for palliative resources from the state's legitimisation apparatus. Once these channels were withdrawn, CIOAC and other CAP organisations were forced to make demands on the state from outside its spaces and used counter-hegemonic discourse and confrontational tactics to challenge political and economic stability. However, Fox goes on to argue that the paradox for social organisations is that, in their efforts to shape the state, it often manages to shape them (Ibid: 26). This has certainly proved accurate in the state's response to the 2003 uprising that shaped and continues to define state-peasant movement relations in Mexico to this day.

In response to the strong mobilisations and societal support for the movement the government was forced to organise eight tables of dialogue thematically guided on the basis of MECAM's original demands. The fact that the government did not have a counter-proposal to contest the peasant organisations indicated that, from the outset, the official strategy was to contain the movement without the intention of jointly constructing a project to salvage and restructure the countryside (Rubio, 2003: 17). On 23 April, following protracted negotiations between peasant leaders and the highest levels of government and the state bureaucracy, nine organisations of MECAM signed the National Agreement for the Countryside with the government. However, the final agreement did not resolve any of the counter-hegemonic demands of the movement - the exclusion of corn and beans from NAFTA liberalisation, a moratorium on GMOs, modifications to Article 27 of the constitution, exceptions to tariff cuts and reductions to rural budget (Rubio, 2004: 34), i.e. all of those demands that would impact the reproduction of the neoliberal accumulation model. This begs the question as to why nine of the twelve organisations signed an agreement that did not resolve any of the movement's six core demands. Rubio (2004: 34) points out that, despite the lack of resolution of its core demands, the agreement did represent some significant advances for the peasant movement. It had incorporated peasant organisations into consultation regarding rural project design, agreed a 2.8 billion peso (\$US 0.28 billion) emergency fund for urgent rural projects, and forced the government into agreeing to update and amplify PROCAMPO. It also created crop specific national production programmes targeted at small producers and designed to incorporate the most marginalised rural classes and groups. All of these demands could be engaged with by the state as a) they could be incorporated into the existing neoliberal accumulation

model, and b) by engaging with them the state could be seen to be acting on the peasant movement's demands and neutralising and (partially) incorporating counter-hegemony into its project, thus reproducing its own hegemony and weakening the counter-hegemonic threat.

According to prominent analyses of MECAM (Rubio, 2003; Concheiro & Quintana, 2004; Bartra, 2003a) whether or not organisations signed the National Agreement for the Countryside was not a cause of internal division within the movement, nor an important act in terms of furthering the movement's core demands. It merely represented a first step in changing the relationship between the state and the peasantry. While symbolically this may have been the case the reality is that MECAM's organisations, on the surface struggling on a shared platform of food sovereignty, were very distinct from the outset. The CAP's main reason for mobilising was the withdrawal of their budget by a PAN government attempting to end state corporatism. On the other hand, organisations such as ANEC, UNORCA and CNOC were protesting NAFTA and the economic situation in the countryside more broadly. Although this did not prevent an alliance based on a shared agenda initially, this alliance broke down as a result of fundamental differences of interest within the movement that became apparent from the signing of the agreement onwards. These differences were based primarily on the structures of the organisations involved in MECAM and the political strategies employing a food sovereignty discourse that were pursued as a result of these factors.

According to Bartra & Otero (2008b: 25) the most important aspect of MECAM was the political construction of the peasantry as a class, with class defined not as a structural position in the relations of production but a process in which people articulate common identities as a result of shared experiences. As such, the movement was a class convergence, a class programme, and a class based negotiation (with government) - a class based response to neoliberalism (Ibid: 26). However, whether class is defined as a structural position or one based on shared experiences, the assumption that the movement constituted a singular, united class response to neoliberalism is accurate in appearance only. Bartra & Otero go on to praise MECAM for achieving unity between organisations such as CIOAC with roots in the land struggle with groups based primarily on peasant production demands. However, they do not interrogate the fragile nature of this unity whose weakness, as we will see, is based fundamentally on the class cleavages and organisational and leadership structures between these two very distinct forms of

organisation. A lack of appreciation of these factors leads to shallow examination of movement demands and the strategies peasant organisations employ when engaging with the state that focus on leadership co-optation (Concheiro & Quintana, 2004: 4), clientelist practices (Navarro, 2002) or 'good' organisations seeking structural change versus 'bad' organisations seeking purely material benefits (Celis, 2005). These analyses are based purely on the relationship between the state and organisational leaderships without any examination of how the relationship between peasant leaders and their mass bases shape organisation strategies and relationships with the state. The class base of the organisation, its class specific interests and demands, shape - without determining - organisational strategies, forms of engagement, and demand-making vis-à-vis the state. In the case of MECAM there was, and remains, a fundamental class-based cleavage between the non-CNC members of the CAP and those of a peasant production based focus such as UNORCA, ANEC and CNOC. This difference was concealed under the strategic alliance in 2002 but did emerge following the signing of the agreement. The PAN administration was able to play on these differences to weaken and eventually destroy the movement.

Peasant centrals represent some of the most marginalised landed peasants in Mexico. They include CIOAC, CODUC (Coalition for Democratic Urban and Peasant Organisations), the CCC (Cardenas Peasant Central) and CNPA (National Coordinator '*Plan de Ayala*') (the latter began as a coalition of regional organisations, but its interactions with the state have seen it become as centralised as the traditional centrals). Although these organisations struggle in principle for the reversal of neoliberal policies they are directly accountable to a mass base with pressing and immediate material needs. For these organisations' leaders the main goal of MECAM was to force the state to provide basic social infrastructure and services for their members and to ensure that there was a federal government budget allocated each year for providing these kinds of projects. CIOAC's adhesion to MECAM and the mobilisation of their bases under the banner of food sovereignty must be understood in this light, as a political strategy to re-access state resource channels. It was not a struggle, as it appears on the surface, for the state's transformation and the development of an alternative food and agricultural system.

Second in importance for the centrals were demands for the productive development of their members' land. The majority of CIOAC's members, like those of CODUC, CNPA and the CCC, produce low yields of low quality on eroded, marginal lands and cannot afford inputs. A logic based on peasant household (relative) autonomy from the market (commodity and

labour) predominates (see chapter three) as the family nucleus attempts to reproduce itself through a combination of subsistence cultivation, commodity production and the sale of family labour power not on the basis of profit maximisation but with the overarching aim of securing long term access to the land. The strategy of the centrals' leaders in MECAM was based fundamentally on attempting to meet the demands of this social base whose access to the land, and viability and quality of life on it, could be significantly enhanced through access to basic social services and support for production. That these were the overriding goals - and achievements - of CIOAC is corroborated by Lolo Lopez, CIOAC's national secretary, as well as the fact that the organisation's objective was first and foremost to contest the Fox administration's attempt to cut its corporatist ties with the CAP.

'(Me) For CIOAC, what was the most important achievement of MECAM?

Firstly that the government sat down with the peasant organisations. When Fox started he said that those organisations are good for nothing, that he wanted to end with them...The movement forced fundamental changes - firstly the financial ceilings and second we could create new programmes that didn't exist before; rural housing, '70 and over', PROMOSAC (programme for women in the rural sector). Also for productive systems, coffee for example. These were substantial achievements - not fundamental ones because we said that there should be a change in the model because for 30 years this model hasn't worked and has created more poverty, more inequality between the rich and the poor'.

José Dolores López Barrios, CIOAC's national secretary (11 February 2013, Mexico City).

It is clear from the above statement where CIOAC's priorities lay - re-establishing corporatist ties with the state was more important than pushing for a reversal of neoliberal policies. CIOAC and the other centrals agreed that structural change was necessary in the long term for the future of the Mexican peasantry. However, in the short term its leaders believed that the needs of their own members would best be served within the current model through pressuring the state to fulfil its obligations to the marginalised landed peasantry. The organisation and the expectations of its mass base are built on a discourse of the state's obligations to the peasantry and the practice of leaders channelling state resources to their members via neo-corporatist and electoral channels. For CIOAC, MECAM provided a powerful counter-hegemonic discourse used by the organisation to force its way back into the state's hegemonic apparatus to which it had become dependent. The organisation's entire working practices had become based on clientelist resource channelling and leaders' positions within the organisation as well as members' (neo-corporatist) expectations that legitimated their leaders on the basis of resource access made re-establishment of neo-corporatist relations with the state of paramount

importance. This approach has been widely criticised by production based organisations within MECAM and commentators on the movement; it terminally weakened the counter-hegemonic force of MECAM and its potential to bring about real structural transformations to the neoliberal accumulation model. However, these criticisms fail to recognise the difficult internal tensions that the centrals face. They must balance meeting their members' pressing short-term needs with struggles for longer term structural changes in the context of historical processes of state (neo-) corporatism, centralised organisational structures and the resulting political culture that has permeated and developed in these organisations. Celis (2005), for example, states that the Centrals prioritised the negotiation of immediate programmes over the reorientation of policy and state institutions in favour of the peasant sector that production based organisations such as ANEC and CNOC were striving for. Concheiro & Quintana (2004: 15) similarly praise the latter group for seeking to modify the Mexican political system while the former cynically used the opportunities MECAM created to re-establish neo-corporatism. Remarkably they blame the centrals for 'not being able to see beyond their own bases' (Ibid: 4), as if their membership was of little importance in the grand scheme of structural change. Navarro (2003) similarly discounts the importance of following the consensus of the centrals' bases, which decided that their organisations should sign the agreement with government, as if the leadership should see beyond the ill-informed, misguided (mystified) ideas of those below them for the more important struggle for social change. However, Max Correa, national president of the CCC, indicates how difficult it is for his organisation, and the centrals in general, to combine the need to meet the demands of its members - something the above writers fail to examine - with systemic struggles.

'Some have the idea that instead of dedicating ourselves to the macro vision we focused on the micro of the operation rules of the programmes but it's not like that because, at the end of the day, you have to understand that a macro agreement needs to produce results at the micro level. And at the micro level these results are achieved in the operation rules. There is where it says how much, how and where something concrete is going to be received by the people. Others say that we were only interested in securing organisational budgets (with state institutions and federal and state governments), not in changes to public policy, but you also have to ask another question - what do the people gain? So yes, you need to have a strategic long-term vision, structural transformations, but at the same time you have to be always giving solutions to the people in a concrete way. We carry on pressuring the government because it didn't fulfil what it signed...but other organisations don't have grassroots bases and aren't obliged to respond to them with concrete things'. **Max Correa, CCC national president (11 February 2013, Mexico City).**

Max Correa makes another important observation with regard to organisational structure. Not only do the centrals represent a different class base with different class based demands to those of production oriented organisations; there are also important differences between these two types of organisations in terms of structure that shape how these demands are expressed and responded to.

We saw earlier how UNORCA emerged to articulate the struggle for ejidal surpluses and for the promotion and support of peasant production more generally. In chapter two the origins of ANEC as an organisation representing producers of basic grains was discussed. CNOC's origins are similar to those of ANEC in that it sought peasant control of state infrastructure and services for the coffee sector (rather than basic grains) as the state withdrew from peasant support in these areas. The two fundamental differences that these organisations have with regard to the centrals is a) the class composition of their bases and b) their organisational structures, both of which have led to them engaging with the state in different ways as they attempt to meet the specific demands of their memberships.

The production oriented organisations of MECAM represent market-oriented peasants whose core demands are not social in nature. They tend to be previously relatively well established producers that worked closely with state institutions responsible for productive and marketing assistance in the developmentalist era and that have seen markets for their goods, and their ability to viably produce them, adversely affected or destroyed by neoliberal policies. These organisations do not experience internal pressures to meet peasants' immediate material demands through access to state resource channels as they were never constituted on this basis. Rather than a hierarchical structure they operate more as a hub in a network of regionally autonomous producer organisations. Not only are their members relatively better off than most of those in the centrals; more importantly than that in terms of their class composition and interests, they are more market dependent. Rather than seeking (relative) autonomy from the market as the majority of CIOAC's coffee growers do in Chiapas and Oaxaca, the members of production oriented organisations seek more equitable, or 'fair' integration into the market through state support and regulation, and the restriction of the power of agribusiness TNCs to shape markets in their favour. The latter necessarily demands structural change to the neoliberal accumulation model as their members are facing production and reproduction crises as a direct result of neoliberal economic policies that have removed state support for production and destroyed their markets by allowing heavily subsidised imports to flood the

internal market. Their market dependent members will continue struggling to survive and leaving the land unless neoliberal policies are reversed. Structural change is the only way that their members' demands can be met. However, for the centrals, whose members' core demands are based on social service provision followed by support for production - production based predominantly on the logic of achieving relative autonomy from the market rather than for increased integration into it - leaders work on the basis that real material improvements can still be provided to their members within the current model. According to these organisations' leaders this is best achieved through a close working relationship with state legitimating institutions on the basis of maximising their organisation's budgets with such institutions and ensuring that corporatist ties are not cut, but rather strengthened. The difference between these two distinct strategies - as a result of their distinct class bases and organisational structures - is clear in the three statements below, the first by CIOAC's national secretary, the second by CODUC's national president and the last by ANEC's national leader.

'Their (ANEC) work is more business oriented (empresarial), ours is more social. Being a social organisation with a membership, with a social base, what we have to do is negotiate with the government. If you dedicate yourself to attending to a group of people, but for this group of people you have to deal with SEDESOL (Secretary for Social Development), but you don't get on with the representative then they're not going to attend to you and that's going to screw the people'. **José Dolores López Barrios, CIOAC's national secretary (11 February 2013, Mexico City).**

(ANEC) is not a union based organisation. We are two distinct interests. CODUC is a union organisation whereas they dedicate themselves...to the issue of marketing - it is not a union organisation. You can't deny that they have a political proposal and we coincide in some things, but in practice we differ. We coincide in our position against the government, but in practice they act in another way because of the interests of their group.' **Marco Antonio Ortiz Salas, CODUC's national leader (1 February 2013, Mexico City).**

'ANEC is an organisation of proposals, it doesn't originate (like the centrals) from clientelism, PRI corporatism. We suggest proposals against the neoliberal system with new systems of organisation, without the vices of historic organisations... The peasant movement is not structured around a productive model...just paternalism, paternalism, paternalism. The peasant says - give me - and so if you want to have members you give them. In the moment we went to the table with government to try to change public policy they went to negotiate state resources for those that signed the agreement and we're against this...against clientelism. But they, their members, their clientele, live off this. They are specialists in accessing resources, not in constructing autonomous organisations'. **Victor Suarez, ANEC's Executive Director (8 February 2013, Mexico City).**

The issue of clientelism highlighted by Victor Suarez in the above statement came to the fore in MECAM with the signing of the National Agreement for the Countryside and subsequently. However, rather than a simple process of leadership co-optation by the state implied overtly (Concheiro & Quintana, 2004) or tacitly (Celis, 2005; Navarro, 2003), clientelism and co-optation have historically shaped the politics and expectations within peasant centrals at all levels and in peasant movement-state relationships more generally. The centrals' leaders organise and mobilise their members with the counter-hegemonic discourse of food sovereignty and demands to end neoliberal policies as a political strategy whose main objective - and achievement - is to increase access to the state's hegemonic apparatus in the form of maintaining or increasing organisational budgets. Their use of food sovereignty discourse is not, in practice, counter-hegemonic as it seeks the continuation and expansion of the state's neoliberal legitimisation apparatus, not its transformation. This is not to suggest that CIOAC's leaders are in favour of neoliberal economic policies. Rather their subordinate dependence on the state's apparatus of legitimacy is based on not actively disputing its role in promoting neoliberalism. MECAM's breakdown, although based on the different class and organisational structures of its constituent organisations and the distinct strategies employed to try to meet their interests, was accelerated by the state's strategy of division through clientelism. It has since left the Mexican peasant movement weaker than it was in the decade leading up to MECAM.

Following MECAM, members of the CAP not only managed to reverse Fox's attempts to end with the state's corporatist relations in the countryside; they actually reinforced them. Even Salinas's reconfiguration rural corporatist relations did not achieve the relative control of the countryside and division of the peasant movement that has followed MECAM. The movement's growing strength in opposition to the state elicited a response largely sought by the centrals themselves; the re-opening of neo-corporatist/institutionalised client channels and spaces within the state apparatus for these organisations. Not only did the Fox administration re-open these channels; it expanded them via a proliferation of rural social programmes administered by peasant organisations themselves, and the establishment of organisation specific annual budgets with state legitimating institutions. Increasing the presence of the 'autonomous' peasant movement within the legitimisation apparatus of the state contributed to deepening the former's dependence on the latter. It also increased the peasant movement's subordination to the state, and its role in the social control of its own bases and of the Mexican countryside in general. This has further weakened the Mexican peasant movement's capacity to push for fundamental changes to

policy and the neoliberal accumulation model more broadly. It's counter-hegemonic force, critical for any advance in its 'war of position' with the state in favour of food sovereignty, has again been neutralised by the state and Mexico's political culture imbued with corporatist, clientelist and patrimonial relations. It has further deepened CIOAC (and other centrals') functional dependence on the state for their survival, which involves managing *for the state* their own grassroots bases. Counter-hegemonic struggles have been rejected or taken on a simulated, functional form aimed at demonstrating mobilisational and electoral strength to secure or retain state resource access, not to challenge and oppose the state and its role in promoting an accumulation model systematically destroying the viability of the peasant economy. CIOAC's focus on state resources, rather than combining with oppositional struggles that demand access to state resources as a fundamental right of its members while simultaneously demanding fundamental changes to the accumulation model itself, has effectively substituted counter-hegemonic struggles.

The following section will examine how, under very different conditions and circumstances, Ecuador's national peasant-indigenous movement, FENOCIN in particular, has engaged with the 'anti-neoliberal' state project of Rafael Correa. It will show that, like CIOAC, increased integration of FENOCIN into the state apparatus, rather than resulting as expected in increased influence within the state to influence policy in its favour, has weakened the movement's strength and counter-hegemonic potential, albeit via very different mechanisms as a result of distinct organisational structures and modes of state intervention.

4.6 Organisational Structures and Counter-Hegemony in Ecuador's Food Sovereignty Movement

FENOCIN is a pyramidal structured confederation but, unlike CIOAC, its base organisations exercise considerable organisational autonomy with respect to internal decision-making. Their internal structures are not only relatively democratic in terms of leadership; they are also far more participatory and deliberative than their Mexican counterparts. Regular (typically weekly) meetings take place in both Andean and coastal organisations and involve participatory discussion that guide organisational activities and strategies within prevailing local, regional and national political and economic contexts. Most CIOAC municipal

organisations similarly convene weekly meetings in Chiapas and Guerrero, but these are closely related to issues regarding state projects and electoral issues. They are overwhelmingly led by municipal leaders and membership participation, while certainly active, is more important for determining who accesses state resources rather than guiding organisational strategy and forming the basis of programmes of struggle which, as we saw in the previous section, are largely determined by the leaders. In FENOCIN, local and regional constituent organisations are not subject to the decisions and demands of the national leadership which acts instead as a central hub for articulating the demands and struggles of its bases and elaborating proposals and strategies on the basis of regular meetings between the national committee and the leadership groups of its member organisations (at least until the recent past and the government of Correa which, as we will see, has led to a crisis of representation for FENOCIN's national leaders)¹⁶. Although the internal structures of FENOCIN's constituent organisations vary in terms of their class compositions (see chapter two), relatively democratic leadership structures in which leaderships are periodically replaced by internal elections predominate. State intervention, a central element in shaping organisational structure and the potential to construct, retain and exercise counter-hegemony, has historically not been defined by corporatist relations and resource channelling to organised subaltern groups and has, as a result, helped organisations retain their political autonomy and their internal democracy to a much greater extent than is the case in Mexico. So too did the proliferation of NGOs in Ecuador from the 1980s onwards. While the NGO model may arguably have contributed to the gradual process of substitution of radical, structural demands for a focus on identity politics and struggles for 'rural development' decoupled from issues of land and wealth concentration (Breton, 2008 & 2013), it nevertheless allowed peasant organisations to retain a far greater degree of political autonomy than their Mexican counterparts, subordinated and dependent as the latter were to the state under the neo-corporatist model. As a result, FENOCIN was able to retain a high degree of autonomy from the state - essential for the development and maintenance of independent sociocultural and political consciousness as the basis of counter-hegemony (Buttigieg, 1995: 19) - until the rise of Correa and his political movement.

¹⁶ As discussed in chapter 2, FENOCIN's national leadership – traditionally based in the Andes – have neglected coastal organisations over recent decades and, more recently, even lost the support of some Andean groups as a result of alleged undemocratic decision-making. However, the national leadership has not historically interfered in the internal workings of its regional organisations where autonomy with regard to organisational strategy, political alliances and work with state institutions and NGOs has been – and remains – considerable. Rather, the national leadership is accused by some member organisations of acting unilaterally without the knowledge or support of the grassroots on issues of FENOCIN's national policies and political strategies.

In the 1980s, FENOCIN leaders formed in the land struggle and ideologically guided by the struggle for socialism, like CIOAC, failed to update their arguments and strategies to the needs of its bases suffering the consequences of neoliberal transition and the leadership lost legitimacy (FENOCIN, 1999: 45). FENOCIN languished as demand for land was either fulfilled or diminished and leaders failed to adapt the organisation to the changing needs of its now landed mass base (Zamosc, 1994: 47). It stagnated as a social force and, according to its own leadership, became an organisation of paternalistic support based on providing the membership with resources from a reconfigured state apparatus of legitimisation, namely the rapidly expanding NGO sector, international foundations and development agencies that attempted to fill the void left by state withdrawal. According to Pedro de la Cruz, FENOCIN's national leader from 1996 to 2009, as the management of these resources became more centralised, less democratic practices developed and the leadership and organisational direction became more personal, more 'caudillista' (Ibid: 48). Participation in the CONAIE uprisings of the 1990s and a change of FENOCIN's leadership led to the organisation's internal restructuring and 'the institutionalisation of a new democratic culture for decision making' in which the role of the national leadership committee was reconfigured from an executive function to one of coordination in an attempt to return power of decision making closer to the bases (Ibid: 94). Participative decision making processes were instituted and a new organisational programme based on workshops with base organisations was implemented that prioritised lines of work in each union (Ibid: 96). The result was a significant upsurge in the organisation as a social force. It articulated a new discourse founded on indigenous and class based demands, including the recognition of Ecuador as an intercultural nation, indigenous cultural and territorial rights as well as demands for democratisation of land and water.

Despite the national indigenous-peasant movement's support of Gutierrez's government, the independent organising tradition and political autonomy from the state historically exercised by Ecuador's social movements meant that the debilitating effects of Gutierrez's neoliberal turn were not catastrophic, especially for FENOCIN who had not entered government. FENOCIN's leaders, following the organisation's restructuring, were able to return to their bases and regroup a counter-hegemonic force based on a discourse that combined struggles for democratisation of land and water access, indigenous rights claims and support for peasant production backed up by a mobilised mass base that demanded an end to Gutierrez's government. Unlike CIOAC in Mexico, FENOCIN's organisational structure

and practices have historically been much more conducive to the development and retention of counter-hegemony. FENOCIN's relatively high levels of internal democracy and participative decision-making practices from the mid-1990s onwards, combined with the state's relative lack of corporatist practices or interference in the internal structures of Ecuador's social organisations in general, has encouraged the development of an independent socio-cultural and political consciousness and construction of counter-hegemonic discourses and practices that are only possible when leaders are embedded in, and held accountable to, their bases. In Otero's (2004a: 225) terms, FENOCIN, at least from 1996 to 2006, was a 'popular-democratic' organisation able to develop and mobilise an alternative hegemonic project. Rather than top-down dissemination of leaders' decisions and strategies, FENOCIN's proposals had, until the rise of Correa, tended to be driven from the bottom up. This is not to downplay the organisation's internal problems, namely the historic domination of Andean over coastal interests, or decisions taken unilaterally at times by some national leaders once in power; despite these, the organisation's structure has proved resilient to the maintenance of counter-hegemony as evidenced by its mobilisational capacity and the nature of its demands from the land reform era to its rejection of, and powerful mobilisations against, neoliberalism in the course of the 1990s to the early 2000s.

As a result of Gutierrez's neoliberal policies, waves of inconformity and spontaneous social protest continued across the country in response to the worsening economic situation. These waves of unrest were expressed in the 2006 presidential elections with the support of an 'anti-systemic' candidate whose strength derived from his criticism of the traditional political elite and his promise to reverse neoliberal policies. This candidate, Rafael Correa, an ex-minister of the economy, based his electoral campaign on a discourse very closely aligned to that used by Ecuador's social movements over the preceding decade. With the support of the social movements, he reached the presidency and once in power managed to marginalise traditional political parties by convoking a constituent assembly that would reconfigure the national political landscape.

The aim of redefining and restructuring the state via a national constituent assembly had been a demand of the social movements and other leftist political forces since 1999 and was made a reality by a government considered 'close' to the former, without being considered their own; it proposed changes in line with those demanded by the movements, but these did not involve concrete agreements between the two sides and Correa had

never been directly involved with Ecuador's social organisations. Instead, Correa's proposals were based on a new political project named 'the citizen revolution' that aimed to respond first and foremost to recent mobilisations by urban populations (Muñoz, 2010: 156). The urban focus of the citizen revolution is critical for understanding Correa's project to re-establish the state as the driver of efficient and more equitable capitalist development, and therefore his relationship with the peasant-indigenous movement. This project, in a similar way to Salinas' modernisation project in Mexico, is based on access to cheap food for the mass of the labour force as a core element of making the national economy more competitive in an increasingly liberalised world market. This goal is fundamentally at odds with Ecuador's peasant movement and its struggles for food sovereignty.

April 2007 saw the formation of Ecuador's National Constituent Assembly following a national referendum, a massive achievement for the peasant-indigenous movement. Hopes ran high among social movements that this was the political opening that they had long desired (Becker, 2011: 49). However, in the September 2007 elections for constituent assembly delegates Correa consolidated his power by winning a majority of seats. This granted him important room for manoeuvre regarding the shaping of the constitution. He had campaigned without a party but once in power constructed a new political movement - '*Alianza País*' (Country Alliance - AP). AP won nearly 70 percent of the votes for the assembly and FENOCIN's national leader at the time, Pedro de la Cruz, became an AP delegate. De la Cruz, along with many other indigenous leaders, including some that had broken away from Pachakutic (the national indigenous party), aligned themselves with AP in the belief that they could most effectively influence the contents of the new constitution by working within Correa's government (Ibid: 50). This decision would later prove critical for their organisations' counter-hegemonic struggles once Correa began to backtrack on promises he had made to the movement in order to gain the presidency. Zibechi (2005) argues, with reference to CONAIE leaders' insertion into Gutierrez's government, that instead of being an alternative to state power, as it had been over the course of the 1990s, the indigenous movement's leaders began a strategy of conquest of state power that had never before entered into the plurinational, anti-neoliberal political project. Doing so with little or no consultation with its bases and no concrete programmatic agreements with Gutierrez, the organisations lost support from the grassroots through their own actions. The same process took place with FENOCIN and other smaller peasant organisation leaders in their uncritical alliance with Correa. Even after the recent crisis that Ecuador's social

movement had experienced through its integration with Gutierrez's government, it was widely believed that this time the move from opposition to positions of power within the state would be different, that fundamental changes to the state and neoliberal policies could be achieved within Correa's government and embedded in state institutions.

The assembly itself was a space of genuine participation for broad sectors of Ecuadorian society. According to Unda (2011: 115), the proposals made by social movements found channels that allowed them to realise their demands, at least on paper in the new constitution. The process of drafting the constitution, especially the chapters relating to food sovereignty, was a hegemonic struggle for consensus over the scope and meaning of the term and the policies that would be required to bring it about. FENOCIN, the most important social organisation in terms of drafting proposals for domestic agrarian policy, proposed concrete commitments from the state to support small and medium sized producers, a necessity it argued for the achievement of food sovereignty. It also proposed state support to distribute land to the peasant sector to be complemented by affordable credit, state funded training, the prohibition of genetically modified materials and defence and promotion of locally adapted seeds. However, the ideological heterogeneity of AP and the state bureaucracy proved to be one of the greatest barriers to FENOCIN's proposals. So too were agribusiness interests and supermarket chains (Supermaxi and PRONACA in particular) whose influence, though less overt, was none the less significant in the drafting of the constitution, allied to or inserted as they were (and remain) in the state bureaucracy, namely the Ministry of Agriculture (MAGAP).

MAGAP and the Ministry of Coordination of Social Development tried to convince the assembly that rural development policy should be based on productive chains between peasants and big agricultural companies (Garcés, 2008). In addition, Correa himself was against FENOCIN's proposal which he saw as a threat to his citizen revolution project; his plans for the productive development of agriculture involved GMOs and encouraging investment from transnational agricultural capital. Without the income that this would generate his project to re-centre the state as the driver of (capitalist) development would not be possible; for him, land redistribution and support for the peasant sector would not only discourage private capital investment but also drain the economy of the resources necessary for his hegemonic project. The result was a final constitution in which 'food sovereignty' was recognised as a guiding state policy, but without the core elements of FENOCIN's proposals.

There remains the crystallisation of the struggle for hegemony within the constitution itself. The state was forced to recognise the food sovereignty discourse and incorporated it into its project to legitimate itself in Ecuadorian civil society. However, the state's partial incorporation of counter-hegemony significantly weakened the movement's force as Correa appropriated the food sovereignty discourse without the practical measures required to make the organisation's proposals reality. The final version of the constitution contains contradictory articles pertaining to food sovereignty and their openness to interpretation. Article 281 states that food sovereignty constitutes 'a strategic objective of the state' to guarantee that all people, communities and nationalities have self sufficiency in healthy foods that are culturally appropriate. Article 282 says that the state will regulate equitable access to land and that the latifundio and the concentration of land are prohibited. However, in article 321 the state claims to recognise and guarantee the right to private property, provided it meets its 'social and environmental function', the meaning of which is nowhere specified, while Article 323 declares that any form of confiscation of property is prohibited (Political Database of the Americas, 2011).

CONAIE critically supported the new constitution; it had not given them everything they demanded but it did represent advances for indigenous peoples, it was a strike against neoliberalism and a step towards opening up democratic participation (Becker, 2011: 59). FENOCIN, however, aligned itself completely with not just the new constitution but also Correa's overall political project. CONAIE had already suffered the consequences of allying itself with the national government and was not going to uncritically support the new administration. FENOCIN and other smaller organisations, on the other hand, remained convinced not only of the new government, but also that it must support it absolutely and from within. The move from counter-hegemony to incorporation within Correa's emerging hegemonic project presented itself as a 'natural' step to take for many peasant-indigenous leaders outside of CONAIE.

'We always questioned the state, even to the point of fighting against it. But when Correa assumed the presidency, the presidential campaign was fundamentally for change. Many governments had betrayed us before, but Correa came and convened the organisations and we came to incorporate ourselves in the new constitution that recognises the denouncements of the organisations' struggles as rights'. José Agualsaca, national president of the FEI (10 April 2013, Quito).

For FENOCIN, FEI, FENACLE and CNC-EA - Ecuador's major indigenous/peasant organisations after CONAIE - 2006 was marked not only by their support for Correa's

presidency but complete adhesion to his government (Trujillo, 2010: 16). By backing their proposals and using their discourses around food sovereignty, land and water democratisation, 'interculturality' etc. Correa hoped to create a political counterweight to the more powerful and well organised CONAIE, a major protagonist in the overthrow of Mahuad and Gutierrez and a potential threat to the stability of his own regime. The incorporation of these smaller organisations was an attempt by the nascent regime to consolidate a hegemonic bloc that could generate and expand the necessary consensus for Correa's government and hegemonic project and protect it from counter-hegemonic forces on the far right, namely the Guayaquil business elite and the still powerful conservative landlord class. By favouring these smaller confederations at the beginning of his presidency and granting them official recognition as legitimate interlocutors of rural interests, Correa weakened CONAIE's claim to speak for all native peoples (Becker, 2013: 10). The adhesion of FENOCIN to Correa's government allowed it greater space of public action and recognition despite being less powerful than CONAIE, but had a significant impact on the organisation's political autonomy. This served the government in the process of defining and legitimating proposals in the constituent assembly as CONAIE was no longer the overwhelmingly dominant organisation that could claim representation; it became a voice among others and FENOCIN acquired the greatest recognition within decision making apparatuses (Trujillo, 2010: 17).

On 18 February 2009 Ecuador's new food sovereignty law came into effect, enshrining in the country's legal system articles 281 and 282 of the new constitution. However, as Correa has consolidated power it has become increasingly clear that his conception of food sovereignty is very much at odds with that of the peasant movement whose own vision was enshrined in the constitution and the law. Correa has appropriated the food sovereignty discourse, emptied the term of its original content and re-filled it with his own notions that now guide rural policy. The internal fragmentation and weakening of the peasant-indigenous movement - namely the wedge the state has driven between CONAIE and other smaller, previously marginalised organisations such as FENOCIN, FEI, and FENACLE - has certainly not helped the food sovereignty movement to counter Correa's strategy¹⁷.

¹⁷ While a number of writers rightly point out that Correa has been highly successful in weakening CONAIE (and political opposition in general) - one of the most vocal and powerful critics of his presidency and political project - through co-optation of social movement leaders into AP (de la Torre, 2010: 164; Unda, 2011: 120) and support for competing, smaller organisations such as FENOCIN that align with his project (Novo, 2010), tensions within the indigenous peasant movement were already prevalent prior to Correa's rise to power. These were based on the perception of smaller organisations such as FENOCIN that CONAIE was increasingly dominating spaces within the state apparatus and control of state resources at the expense and active exclusion of other organisations following its participation in Gutierrez's government, and that its discourse had become

However, the AP government's hegemonic citizen revolution project has been highly successful in legitimising its own notion of food sovereignty and the policies put in place to implement it. This has not only received support from wide sectors of Ecuadorian society, but also from much of the grassroots bases of peasant organisations themselves despite the protestations of their national leaderships. FENOCIN's internal structures and Correa's policies of engaging with, discrediting and bypassing peasant organisations is central to understanding the food sovereignty movement's weakening over the course of Correa's presidency. The Ecuadorian state has gained support from grassroots communities whose leaders - increasingly drawn from their bases physically and ideologically as a result of their adhesion to Correa's government and emphasis on high level negotiations and presence in state institutions at the expense of community level work - have failed to shape the food sovereignty discourse around their specific needs. As a result, Correa's own notions of the term, and the policies that support it, have gained consensus among much of the rural population whose national organisations appear increasingly redundant now that the government 'is on their side'.

Correa's own notion of food sovereignty, although not officially articulated, has been demonstrated in practice to a) not be based on democratisation of Ecuador's still highly unequal agrarian structure (central to the food sovereignty movement's own demands and the 2008 constitution), and b) be focused on increasing the productivity and efficiency of small- and medium-sized producers conceived as private farmers along capitalist lines. This is opposed to the centrality of sustainability, and the fostering and promotion of crop diverse agro-ecosystems, as the overriding objectives for the food sovereignty movement. In December 2008, when the food sovereignty law was still being drafted, Correa gave the first public indications that his position was at odds with that of the national peasant movement and the words of the constitution, and that putting the concept into practice may require adapting some of the constitutional agreements.

increasingly ethnocentric and exclusionary of the non-indigenous population. Correa's strategy developed these tensions to weaken CONAIE by driving a wedge between it and other peasant-indigenous organisations. At the organisational level, CONAIE appropriated control of CODENPE (Development Council of the Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador) and state run bilingual education for itself, excluding other organisations. At the community level the ethnification of its discourse often excluded non-indigenous, or non-kichwa speaking people from access to its structures and the state resources it was able to mobilise.

'We studied the food sovereignty law. Unfortunately in this there are still many ambiguities, a lot of imprecision...because food sovereignty isn't a clear concept. What is food sovereignty according to the constitution? It's not even 'food security'...it's a list of good intentions: to combat poverty, so the people eat well, to give work to small producers, for land distribution...But this then doesn't coincide with their concept of 'food sovereignty' which is understood as the country not being vulnerable in terms of food, right?...food sovereignty (according to the food sovereignty movement) is that we have, from the communities, from the little towns, from the parishes, from the cantons - food SELF-SUFFICIENCY! This is a barbarity! Because this would mean that every parish, in every family, in the plots (huertos) would have to plant from potatoes to rice, even have hens, pigs, cows...so that every person is food self-sufficient. That is a barbarity! It's not possible. It's not desirable...Why act against the principles of the modern economy, such as that of specialisation? That's to say: if there's land that's good for potatoes and there's other land that's good for rice, well then one produces potatoes and the other rice, but not all potatoes and rice! That is inefficient, right?' **Rafael Correa, Enlace Ciudadano 99, 13 December 2008.**

The above quote demonstrates not only Correa's criticisms of the food sovereignty law as inefficient and unworkable, but also the intentional misrepresentation of the movement's proposals to the masses (aided by direct access to the population via a mass media he increasingly controls) as part of a strategy of delegitimising both the proposals and the organisations themselves. Elías Arias, one of FENACLE's national leaders, confirms this process:

'This government has come to power with the discourse of the social organisations. Agrarian reform - now the government takes it as a component of its work to show that it is fulfilling (its obligations) towards society...In the issue of family agriculture there is still no clear definition despite the food sovereignty law. We entered into debate with MAGAP that used to define that Ecuador should prioritise food security, that products enter to secure food supply instead of family production supplying the national market. There have been significant advances in this process, but the limitations are that the government has appropriated the political discourse'. **Elías Arias, member of FENACLE's national directive (7 May 2013, Guayaquil).**

Amongst peasant organisation leaders there is worry and frustration regarding Correa's strategy and, more importantly, its success in reshaping the discourse of the movements that took him to power in a way that does not question the prevailing agrarian structure and which has still managed to retain, even consolidate, the power of Correa's government and its legitimacy in the eyes of the mass of the population. Romelio Gualán, national president of the CNC-EA, describes how spaces to influence state policy have closed up to social organisations as Correa has consolidated power.

'The government has stopped talking about the agrarian revolution. The government hasn't provided a space so that social organisations can influence public policies, because of this we are really weak. Now MAGAP isn't taking into account the suggestions of the social organisations. It gave us the agrarian roundtable just to justify that it is including the opinions of the social organisations when in reality it is not...MAGAP wants to control everything'.

Romelio Gualán, national president of CNC-EA (11 April 2013, Quito).

Romelio's comments confirm Poulantzas' (1980: 143) observation that popular masses cannot hold power in the state because of the unity of state power wielded by the dominant classes who shift the centre of real power from one apparatus to another as soon as the relationship of forces within any given one seems to be swinging to the side of the popular masses. FENOCIN's struggles to occupy and administer COPISA - Plurinational and Intercultural Conference on Food Sovereignty - (an 'autonomous' [from the state] citizen body created in 2009 'to generate a wide process of debate for the construction of proposals for law, public policies and programmes around the issue of food sovereignty, with the active participation of organisations of civil society and institutions of the state' [COPISA, 2014]) highlight this problem. Initially Correa's government set up the institution to elaborate water, land and environmental laws in line with the promises of the constitution. However, after much organisational effort was dedicated to working within COPISA to elaborate these law proposals over the following years, the administration simply ignored the institution as decision making and power concentrated in the executive. As the organisation's bases were neglected by a leadership focused on change from within the highest levels of the state, Correa's project reached down to grassroots rural communities which increasingly bought in to AP's project and rejected the legitimacy of their own leaders and their (counter-hegemonic) demands.

By 2010/2011 the peasant leaders that had uncritically supported Correa's rise to power became increasingly concerned that the achievements they had made on the paper of the constitution were stalling in their conversion into actual policy and that the government was consolidating itself around a discourse and policies that were increasingly opposed to the organisations' own proposals. A central demand of rural organisations in 2006 was the question of land reform on the basis of (re)distribution as a necessary component of food sovereignty. While the food sovereignty law promised in the 2008 constitution had been promulgated, that pertaining to land - a much more controversial issue - had not been dealt with. In light of the complexity of the land issue it had not been included in the Food Sovereignty Law and so elaboration of the promised land law was delegated COPISA (at that time 'The National Food Sovereignty Conference') to be processed through MAGAP

(Rosero, 2011: 83). The final version of COPISA's proposal was released in December 2011 and, as stipulated in the 2008 constitution, its most controversial aspect was the prohibition of the latifundio. Article 25 of the proposed law defined maximum extension limits for landed property; 500 hectares on the coast and Amazon region, and 200 hectares in the Sierra (COPISA, 2011).

In short, the proposal implied the peasant movement's partial withdrawal from Correa's project with a counter-hegemonic proposal that rejected the direction of the government's rural policy. It demanded a radical transformation of Ecuador's agrarian structure that would necessarily involve mass expropriation of private property and its redistribution among the peasantry. In light of its controversial implications, the proposal remained stuck in negotiations between the executive, MAGAP and the national assembly with Correa and AP hoping that it would eventually be abandoned. However, the lack of government action on the issue would further increase tensions with social organisations increasingly critical of Correa's regime. Correa, in turn, would tackle these organisations head on and focus more attention and state resources on promoting his own (state capitalist) model of rural development at odds with that of the food sovereignty movement.

By 2012 COPISA's land law proposal remained blocked in the bureaucracy with no foreseeable advance. In response various peasant organisations (including FEI and CNC-EA), led by FENOCIN, took direct action in an attempt to force the government to approve the peasant movement's 'own' land law proposal. Under the Participation Law, social organisations are able to present legal proposals to the national assembly with the support of 25,000 national citizens. On 20 March 2012 FENOCIN led a march of over 3,000 people to deliver their land law proposal backed by 41,780 signatures which, by law, had to be discussed and approved within the National Assembly within 180 days of its submission. This proposal, claimed by the organisations submitting it as their own, was actually the work of SIPAE (System of Investigation for the Agrarian Problematic in Ecuador), a research institute based in Quito that had elaborated the proposal and already submitted it without response to the National Assembly almost two years earlier. It was based on the attendance of SIPAE researchers at COPISA's workshops and, submitted by FENOCIN under the participation law, was very similar to that of COPISA's own proposal. Fundamentally, both proposals advocated the same extension limits for rural property and the expropriation of properties exceeding these limits or not fulfilling their 'social and/or environmental' functions. FENOCIN's decision to force the proposal through the assembly

via the participation law represented a direct challenge to Correa's administration from a peasant movement up until that point either unconditionally supportive of the government or 'critical' without being confrontational. This marked an important turning point between the peasant movement and the government and the latter would become increasingly aggressive towards the former in response to this counter-hegemonic threat from below. The extract below from Luis Andrango, FENOCIN's leader at the time, clearly indicates how the Correa administration's strategy of dealing with the peasant movement changed decisively following the proposal's submission.

When this (the land law proposal) became more than an initiative, a socio-political actor demanding a profound change, there began to change the attitude of the government... In this moment the government saw it (as) a threat to the political stability of the regime. In that moment the government position towards the organisation changed; the position isn't now considering us allies, but opponents to the project...they knew that placing limits on the extensions of properties implied conflict with economic sectors strongly linked to the government. As a result they (the government) couldn't say publicly that they didn't back it, but they needed to eliminate and annul the actors demanding this issue'. Luis Andrango, FENOCIN National President 2008-2013 (15 May 2013, Quito).

Correa's partial incorporation of counter-hegemony in the form of legitimating and incorporating into his project peasant organisations such as FENOCIN, as a necessary element of constructing its own hegemony, had reached its limit. As soon as counter-hegemony appeared to threaten the material basis of Correa's project - private property as the foundation of the accumulation model - it had to be eliminated. Such a radical proposal as land expropriation cannot be even partially incorporated into the project and so had to be neutralised or destroyed. That the regime's policy opposes redistribution despite this being enshrined in the national constitution is confirmed by MAGAP's Land Law Director.

'(Me) the government is never going to approve an extension limit, right?

No, never... An extension limit would mean expropriation. If we're talking about the sierra with extension of more than 200 hectares it would mean the expropriation of a good part of the productive land and would cost the state billions of dollars. The state doesn't have the resources for this. We're talking about a total structural change that would imply an enormous economic regression, a regression in terms of development for the citizenry that will affect the whole country. It's not viable economically. What is more important is a minimum limit, not a maximum limit. 'Minifundisation' is a problem here and in the future we want to have legal limits to avoid land fragmentation'. Dr. André Córdoba, MAGAP's land law director (16 May 2013, Quito).

In addition to Correa's appropriation and reinterpretation of the food sovereignty movement's discourse, FENOCIN's leaders have been complicit in their organisation's own weakening as a direct result of their political strategies that have distanced them from their bases and prioritised gaining access to spaces within the state and government positions over organisational work in grassroots communities. FENOCIN's land law proposal, rather than representing an instance of organisational strength as it may appear on the surface, is better understood as a manifestation of this weakness.

The proposal submitted to the National Assembly by FENOCIN was not the organisation's own; it was the work of SIPAE on the basis of COPISA workshops. While these COPISA workshops were in some cases conducted in regions where FENOCIN's members participated this was not the norm. When the organisation sought signatures from its Andean members in support of the proposal not only had the majority not participated in its elaboration; they had never before even seen or discussed the document. Prior to launching the initiative the FENOCIN leadership had not even disseminated it among most of its bases. The majority signed it because their leaders asked them to do so. This is manifested in the fact that the organisation has been unable to mobilise its bases once more in response to the law's lack of progress in the National Assembly; a counter-hegemonic force demanding its application could not be sustained as the majority of FENOCIN's bases did not feel the proposal their own. As such, leaders could not call on them for sustained mobilisation. The extracts below, taken from interviews with FENOCIN members from three different regional organisations, confirm the problem of leadership's growing separation from the base, especially the first given that it is from a community leader of UNORCAC, widely considered among FENOCIN's members as the most influential constituent organisation.

We've always told them (FENOCIN's leaders) that sometimes their decisions come from above and because of this there are failures. Any proposal that is made has to come from the bases but it doesn't happen like this. The Land Law couldn't be approved because it comes from their offices without knowing what is required in the communities because they don't come to consult us ... If our proposals aren't being heard then we don't give any importance to the FENOCIN proposal'. Juan Ulquianga, president of UNORCAC's producer association (1 April 2013, Cotacachi).

'They never consulted with us regarding the land and water laws. They just tell us that we have to demand the government address the issues, but they never consult us. Their proposals come from the directive, not from the producers, at least here in Tungurahua'. **Silvio Palacios, PACAT (Agroecological Producers and Associated Trade of Tungurahua) member (25 March 2013, Baños de Agua Santa, Tungurahua).**

'The majority of the organisations remain at the margins. Only some are taken into account.

(Me) Where do their proposals come from then?

They come from their advisors; there are assemblies and there they present their ideas, what they want to do, and we say if we agree. Afterwards their technicians elaborate them. A handful of organisations run FENOCIN'. **Malaquías Santos, president of UNOCYPP in the province of Pichincha (14 April 2013, Puerto Quito).**

The above quotes again confirm Edelman's (1999: 185) assertion, made earlier with reference to CIOAC, that the social movement literature tends to assume high levels of agreement between the aspirations of leaders and their grassroots bases. Scholars almost universally assume that demands expressed by organisational leaderships are pure reflections of those of their bases. In the case of Ecuador this has led to one-sided analyses which attempt to explain the weakening of the indigenous-peasant movement solely on external factors, namely Correa's strategy of containing and weakening social organisations. This will now be analysed, but in the context of the FENOCIN leadership's separation from its bases and how this has significantly weakened the organisation's capacity to respond to Correa's strategy. The organisation's struggle for state power has weakened it as leaders have come to occupy spaces within the state apparatus without the power of decision making. Meanwhile, counter-hegemonic struggles guided by food sovereignty have become less viable as important sectors of the organisation's mass base have come to largely support Correa's project.

4.7 Correa's 'Agrarian Debt': Bypassing Social Movements

In response to growing criticism from the national peasant movement leadership as a result of the lack of progress on the land law and concrete policies regarding food sovereignty, Correa's re-election for a third term in office in 2013 was marked by the administration's stated focus on rural policy and recognition of the government's 'debt' (deuda agraria) with the countryside. Since the 2013 elections the AP administration has propagated a discourse

around this 'debt', and a set of policies and strategies designed to repay it whose objective is to decouple the issue of rural development from a still unimplemented land law and the unresolved issue of land concentration. As with the term 'food sovereignty', how the 'agrarian debt' is conceived is a hegemonic ideological struggle for consensus in civil society between Correa and the social movements. For FENOCIN's leaders this debt is synonymous with the lack of both a land law and concrete policies relating to food sovereignty. Correa, on the other hand, claims to be advancing in the repayment of the debt through productivity improvements. Between the government and the peasant organisations it has become a hegemonic 'war of position' to define what the agrarian debt consists of and gain consensus for this interpretation in Ecuadorian civil society in order shape debates and rural policy around it.

'After it (the agrarian debt) was recognised by the government an effort was made to describe what the agrarian debt is. On one side the organisations raise their own agenda that proposes certain elements; land redistribution, deprivatisation of water, promotion of agro-biodiversity, for a change in the logic of credit issues and forms of production - issues of marketing and storage...They (the government) describe the agrarian debt as a problem of agriculture, not of the democratisation of the means of production, but that fundamentally it is a problem of productivity and of improving the competitiveness of agriculture. And that is the policy of MAGAP...We both recognise the agrarian debt but there is a very big disagreement in how it is understood'. Luis Andrango, FENOCIN national president 2008-2013 (15 May 2013, Quito).

FENOCIN is currently in a very weak position to project its own interpretation of the 'debt' as a result of the combination of Correa's multi-faceted attack on the peasant movement following the 2012 mobilisation and FENOCIN's internal organisational structure and practices that have significantly weakened peasant movement opposition to the state. Similarly to CIOAC in Mexico, the political strategy of seeking presence within the state apparatus has come to dominate the work of the organisation and deepen the problem of leaders leading 'on behalf of', rather than in accordance with, the decisions of their bases. The insertion into the state apparatus that FENOCIN has achieved has become increasingly redundant as a site of power and influence over state policy. As the organisation's bases were neglected by a leadership focused on change from within the highest levels of the state, Correa's project reached down to grassroots rural communities that increasingly bought in to AP's hegemonic project.

One of the most important and effective strategies employed by the Correa administration to weaken the peasant-indigenous movement has been to develop direct links between the

state and rural communities that actively bypass national peasant organisations. This strategy is not simply a reaction to increasing criticism and opposition to his policies by social movement leaders (Becker, 2012: 126), although this certainly is a factor. It is the ideological basis of Correa's overarching project of the citizen revolution and has been facilitated by the organisations' leaders themselves whose focus on working within state institutions and Correa's AP has come at the cost of distancing them physically and ideologically from their bases. Correa's citizen revolution aims to abolish of the kind of sectoral interest representation embodied in social organisations such as FENOCIN. The goal of the project is to forge a more homogenous citizenry and strengthen the state by recuperating for the executive authority over all decisions regarding public policy (Ospina & Lalander, 2012: 16 & 47). According to Breton (2013: 86), contrary to state rhetoric of 'interculturality', the citizen revolution has a universalist face of rights and responsibilities that hides its elitist and exclusionary nature; it ultimately aims, in Eurocentric fashion, to consolidate a homogenising social model with little real respect for demands for recognition and autonomy from the very groups that brought Correa to power.

Social organisations agree with the project of state strengthening; the food sovereignty movement advocates a strong state to control TNC activities and intervene in the economy to promote peasant agriculture. However, they believe that this strengthening must go hand in hand with democratisation of decision making via direct participation of the organisations which, for the government, is interpreted as corporatising the state (Ibid: 47). Correa, in addition to removing funding for state institutions run for and by social organisations, has also designed and implemented rural programmes without the input of rural organisations in either their design or implementation. According to Novo (2010: 7) this is a continuation of Gutierrez's policy of distributing money at the community level through social programmes to co-opt the grassroots and bypass their social organisations. The first of these actions has received much attention in the literature, for example the removal of funding for CODENPE (state funded National Indigenous Development Council) as well as the withdrawal of CONAIE's control of the bilingual education directorate, putting it under administration of the Ministry of Education. These were highly controversial moves heavily criticised by CONAIE for acting unilaterally as president and for authoritarianism (Becker, 2011: 51). However, the literature has paid a little less attention to how Correa has designed rural policy to actively bypass social organisation structures, something particularly relevant to FENOCIN, and how peasant organisations' relationships with their

own bases have facilitated the effectiveness of this policy and weakened their own capacity to act as a counter-hegemonic force.

The most important state rural programmes implemented under Correa's government have all been based on forging direct links between the state/Correa and communities or intra-community groups. Similar to Salinas' establishment of PRONASOL in the 1990s in Mexico, Correa's direct poverty subsidies such as 'socio-bosque' and 'socio-paramo', both monetary transfers for preserving forests and marginal highland soils respectively, and 'bono de vivienda', another state hand-out to pay for housing materials, are based on direct cash payments. So too are those programmes aimed at increasing the productivity and efficiency of peasant production to repay the agrarian debt. All aim to work directly at the community level and make the role of national organisations such as FENOCIN redundant. Behind the provision of poverty subsidies is a ritual of promoting the image of Correa as giving to the most needy (de la Torre, 2010: 164), as doing a 'favour' to the poor which risks being revoked from communities or groups that criticise the regime (Tuaza, 2011: 146). The great part of Correa's discourse is aimed at the poor, oppressed and disenfranchised, and projected frequently through the media, especially his weekly broadcasts to the nation. This discourse, combined with the subsidies, is aimed at translating the possibility of change to these 'citizens' that working with his project and the reformed state can achieve (Andrade, 2011: 65). Social organisations are no longer necessary - Correa is now on their side.

In terms of the administration's productivity based interpretation of the agrarian debt, MAGAP has implemented projects accessible only to production based organisations. These organisations, many of whose members belong to regional and national level social organisations such as FENOCIN, have been encouraged to separate social from productive issues and focus on the latter in order to receive state support. The extracts below from federal and municipal level state institutions respectively, indicate how the strategy of linking directly with community groups entirely on the basis of productive issues, without engaging with the social organisations they are a part of, operates at all administrative levels:

'We don't work with FEI, or with FENOCIN. We work with the bases. We don't work above (this level) because it's very complicated. Those who buy the land are peasants, not organisations. They (the organisations) can help them (land recipients) in many things they may want to do - in training, agro-ecology, whatever. But this is independent of what the ministry does'. Lester Gudiño, MAGAP Plan Tierras technician (20 May 2013, Quito).

'MAGAP only works with grassroots organisations because this way we can assure the greatest number of beneficiaries, the greatest efficiency of action.

(Me) Why should groups not currently organised in a local productive association do so?

Because organised it's easier to receive help from the government and private businesses to improve their situation. Once organised they can join the (provincial) cacao table ('mesa de cacao') where all the entities that form the sector - MAGAP, local producer organisations, businesses, provincial government; direct actors - talk and negotiate the process; profitability, quality improvement, buying and selling etcetera'. Arturo Rivera, MAGAP agronomist for the municipality of Quinindé (16 April 2013, Quinindé).

Peasant organisations protest that the agrarian debt cannot be repaid without profound structural changes (the democratisation of the means of production, namely land and water) and that productivity enhancements for the sake of increased capitalist productivity of small producers will only increase the dependence of the peasantry on an ultimately volatile and proletarianising capitalist market, deepening, not resolving, the agrarian crisis. However, Correa's strategy of forging direct links with the rural population on the basis of productivity enhancement has been highly successful in weakening FENOCIN precisely because of the historic lack of attention paid by the organisation's leaders to its members' production problems. Many of FENOCIN's coastal organisations, UROCAL in particular, had already distanced themselves from FENOCIN's political struggles from the later-1990s as their new needs - based on making a living from land won - were no longer being adequately represented by the organisation. As such, they sought out and received assistance for production and marketing from NGOs that proliferated in the country from the early 1990s. Their production and reproduction strategies are far more dependent on commodity markets than their Andean counterparts who seek (more) land and support for agro-ecology on the basis of retaining relative autonomy from commodity markets through strengthening household subsistence capacity. Correa's conception of food sovereignty - based on improving the productivity and efficiency of small farmers along capitalist lines - and re-centring the state as the driver of development, is responding to the historically neglected demands of coastal organisations. As such, the government's current productivity focus has not surprisingly been well received by FENOCIN's more market dependent coastal members. In terms of the cacao sector, FENOCIN's coastal organisations are involved in MAGAP's ten year cacao rejuvenation project targeted specifically at peasant producers of the national cacao variety. There is much excitement and hope among FENOCIN's cacao producers regarding this plan which has brought them into a close working relationship with MAGAP and further distanced them from FENOCIN's own

struggles, focused as they are on land and water democratisation that predominate in the sierra but not on the coast. Manuel Morales expresses his organisation's support for Correa and describes the cacao project below.

'He (Correa) has done so many things. This year MAGAP is going to help us with the pruning - a technical team of 15 or 20 people from MAGAP will come with machines to do the pruning. It's free for up to 800 plants or a maximum of one hectare. It's to show producers how our cacao plots should look, for sunlight and everything. Then we can copy their example on the rest of the land. There's also the Rural Schools Programme that help with training and marketing. They have also given us plants - we have an agreement (with MAGAP) to receive plants and training'. Manuel Morales, president of AACH, FENOCIN organisation in Chucaple, Esmeraldas, and part of FENOCIN's national leadership committee (15 April 2013, Chucaple).

Joaquín Vázquez, UROCAL president, is similarly positive regarding the increasingly interventionist role of the state in the cacao sector and in forging direct ties with producer organisations.

'(The state) has to help with quality of production and value added with public policies. The state also has to support producer negotiations (with buyers) because we are producers in a determined territory and because of this we can't negotiate well with businesses. And I believe that there are conditions to do this because now, in this political conjuncture, there are possibilities to influence in these spaces. We have to convert producers with low yields of poor quality cacao into efficient producers with good quality production and with value added'. Joaquín Vázquez, UROCAL president (1 May 2013, Machala).

The extract above from UROCAL's president is particularly interesting as it highlights how both the thrust of rural policy and the interpretation of the agrarian debt by Correa's government is very much in sync with market-dependent coastal peasants producing for export facing significant challenges regarding production and marketing. In contrast to their Andean counterparts, struggles for autonomy within commodity markets predominate over those for relative autonomy from them. These peasants are not focused on the democratisation of the means of production as a core aspect of their struggles and by implementing rural policy that improves their market competitiveness and volume of production, Correa has garnered a great deal of support from coastal producer groups. This not only helps legitimise his regime and market-oriented state policy for the peasant sector, but also weakens social organisation leaders concentrated in the Andes that are pushing for radical structural changes based on a rejection of the neoliberal market, not increased integration in to it. However, in the sierra there has also been a significant weakening of FENOCIN under Correa's presidency despite the focus of demands supposedly reflecting the

interests of indigenous Andean peasants. Again, but in distinct ways, this has been the result of the combination of Correa's strategy and that of the organisation's leaders themselves.

While the government has certainly sought to co-opt and divide social organisations (de la Torre, 2010: 164; Trujillo, 2010) and bypass their structures to link the state directly with grassroots rural communities (Novo, 2010), it is important to recognise that Correa's presidency and his anti-poverty programmes have received widespread support across much of the sierra (between 2006 and 2009 social spending more than doubled, from 0.7 percent of GDP to 1.8 percent [Ray & Kozameh, 2012: 12]). This is based not on rural policy as such - FENOCIN's members in the sierra are overwhelmingly critical of the government in this respect. However, there is widespread belief that this will change with the government's emerging discourse on the agrarian debt. The support for Correa's government, and the genuine belief that rural policy will turn in their favour, is based on massive state investment in infrastructure improvements since AP came to power that have significantly improved the lives of many in the sierra¹⁸. The extracts below, taken from interviews with members of FENOCIN's regional organisations in the Andean provinces of Tungurahua and Imbabura respectively, indicates this stance, common to other FENOCIN members in the Andes.

'(Correa's government) has hardly benefitted us at all in terms of PACAT but, at the parish level it has helped us so much. Before his government we had only just got electricity, (we had) dirt roads, no drinking water; no services, just electricity. Thanks to this president \$1.5 million came direct for the construction of drainage, in every house there's drinking water, and he gave us free telephones'. Manuel Torres, Treasurer of PACAT (26 March 2013, San Juan Picaihua, Tungurahua).

'Yes, we have seen improvements to transport routes, an education centre and other big projects here like the road between Cotacachi and Intag.

(Me) but projects specifically for the countryside?

This hasn't changed much; it (the government) hasn't created sources of employment, technology for the peasant sector, drinking water still hasn't reached the highest communities, nor irrigation sources. The transport routes don't solve these problems...The social debt continues and there's still a lot to do, but this same government recognises this debt'. Juan Ulquianga, President of UNORCAC's producer association (1 April 2013, Cotacachi).

¹⁸ Public sector investment increased from 21% of GDP in 2006 to 44% in 2013. The vast majority of this was destined to energy, infrastructure, and transportation projects, as well as social development (World Bank, 2014) and financed with oil revenues.

Correa's infrastructure projects have been accompanied by targeted rural anti-poverty programmes that have increased support for his government and weakened social organisations like FENOCIN. Since their high-point in 2006 when they were able to significantly shape the national debate and constitution in ways that radically challenged the neoliberal model, they have been increasingly forced onto the back foot and into ever more reactionary responses to a government that has appropriated their discourses, appealed to and garnered support from these organisations' mass bases, and moved to progressively close spaces of participation and influence within the state that these organisations have created and occupied. By meeting the material needs of grassroots communities through state programmes that bypass social organisations - whether this is based primarily on productivity improvements for coastal peasants or anti-poverty subsidies and programmes in the sierra - Correa has weakened FENOCIN through demobilisation of its mass bases and, in turn, weakened the counter-hegemonic threat they posed to the (capitalist) state and his regime with their discourse of fundamental, structural change. In the ideological 'war of position' for hegemony in civil society, Correa's conception of the rural debt and productive and anti-poverty policies is winning out over the peasant movement's more radical struggle for food sovereignty.

Counter-hegemonic struggles necessarily require a mobilised and informed mass base and close alignment of the aspirations and ideology of leaders and their mass bases. However, as mass mobilisation tactics were rejected and political autonomy ceded in favour of complete adhesion to Correa's government, work among the bases was neglected. As positions opened for leaders within AP, FENOCIN's leaders at the national level focused on occupying these spaces and elaborating programmatic and law proposals with various 'experts' and technicians rather than working closely with their grassroots organisations to organise and articulate demands, formulate proposals, and disseminate developments across their organisations. This has led to the widely held perception among the bases that FENOCIN's proposals come from 'experts' (for example SIPAE), not the members themselves. Also, as a number of FENOCIN and other social organisation leaders were integrated into the government, for their members the organisations appeared to become a means for projecting their leaders to political positions, creating a loss of trust and weakening the organisations (Trujillo, 2010: 17). Rather than social organisations they are perceived by many to have become political movements taken over by leaders with aspirations of political careers within AP.

'The (FENOCIN) leaders never come. They just want to use us...It's a political movement; when it's convenient for them they seek us out, for example if someone from FENOCIN wants a political position, they seek our support'.
Silvio Palacios, PACAT member (25 March 2013, Baños de Agua Santa, Tungurahua).

While FENOCIN was prioritising occupying government and state positions and neglecting work with its bases, the government's double strategy of forging direct links with communities while paying only lip service to social organisation proposals became increasingly apparent. In the eyes of the bases, FENOCIN's adhesion to Correa's project, rather than strengthening the organisation and its ability to turn its proposals into concrete policies as its leaders had imagined, actually made the organisation increasingly redundant and unnecessary. Having historically based their struggles on anti-capitalist, anti-government and anti-neoliberal foundations, the rise of Correa and his anti-neoliberal discourse made them appear increasingly irrelevant.

'We joined with FENOCIN because of their proposals, but now there's nothing. Now the one who supports us is the government. Now we have the help of the government, something we never had before'. **Silvio Palacios (25 March 2013).**

As FENOCIN's members came to see their organisation as an uncritical ally of Correa's project, and the government began to invest in social programmes and infrastructure development to the benefit of many marginalised rural areas, many saw little reason to continue actively in the organisation. Counter-hegemonic proposals and strategies in opposition to Correa's policies are now largely an untenable option as the bases have for the most part bought in to Correa's project. As the organisations that uncritically allied with Correa during his campaign and first few years of his presidency have become increasingly critical of the government, Correa has in turn sought to delegitimise these groups through an aggressive media campaign while also stepping up repression of dissent and criminalising protest (Lalander & Ospina, 2012).

FENOCIN's leadership, increasingly frustrated by the lack of opportunities to influence state policy from within its apparatus, and having adopted a political strategy centred on state integration and government alliance that had distanced it from a base that it could no longer consistently and strategically mobilise, became more radical in its discourse and criticisms of Correa as it became apparent that AP would not implement the radical proposals enshrined in the constitution. In FENOCIN's 2013 national congress held in Guayas (at which I was present), the outgoing leadership retained its critical stance towards the Correa administration, emphasising that in the past eight years the countryside had not

been revolutionised as promised, that the state continues to favour agribusiness and export-agriculture, not small and landless peasants, and that land concentration has continued with no sign of redistributive policies. This would prove the final critical act of the organisation as former national leader Pedro de la Cruz, AP member and Correa ally, was a central influence in installing a new leadership with greater representation from coastal organisations and those from the sierra explicitly supportive of Correa. From 2013 onwards the organisation's discourse has significantly changed as it has become once more a vocal supporter of Correa and the citizen revolution. On 27 August 2013 FENOCIN's current president and leader of a regional present organisation in the coastal state of Guayas stated his support for Correa's planned oil extraction in the Amazonian Yasuni national park. On 10 July 2014, following lunch with Correa, he stated that the organisation's support for the president would continue and be strong, claiming that 'not only is he good to his word, but he has made reality the demands which our grandparents fought for' (quoted in 'El Ciudadano' online, 11 July 2014). FENOCIN has effectively ceased pressuring for the implementation of Land and Water laws since the new leadership was installed.

4.8 Concluding Comments

The structure of peasant organisations - their class bases, leaderships, and modes of interaction and representation between the two - are critical for the construction and maintenance of counter-hegemony vis-à-vis the state, the latter's strategies to neutralise and eliminate opposition and, ultimately, the ability of the VC to make its demands reality. Following neoliberal transition the relationship between peasant organisations and the state in Mexico and Ecuador was radically reconfigured, seemingly presenting great opportunities for peasant leaders to shape the state and rural policy from within its apparatus. However, this opportunity significantly impacted these organisations' political autonomy and their ability to transform society as a counter-hegemonic force. Peasant leaders, drawn further into the state apparatus and away from their bases, increasingly focused organisational efforts on capturing power within the state. This came at the expense of their political autonomy, grassroots organising and capacity to mount counter-hegemonic struggles that challenged the state and its role in promoting and legitimating an accumulation model systematically destroying the basis of the peasant economy. Rather than shaping the state in their interests, it has led to the weakening of the peasant movement in both countries and lent legitimacy to the state which has partially and

selectively incorporated movement leaders and their discourses into its apparatus of legitimation in order to consolidate its own hegemony. While it is true that hegemony cannot exist without the constant though partial incorporation of counter-hegemony (Mallon, 1994: 71), in the case of Mexico and Ecuador's peasant movements this incorporation has tended to reduce organisations' political autonomy and encouraged the vertical 'stretching' of leaderships - both physically and ideologically - from their bases, weakening their transformative force.

What does the preceding analysis tell us about the food sovereignty movement's counter-hegemonic force in the neoliberal era and struggles for and against state power? Inspired by the Zapatista's struggles for autonomy and radical forms of democracy in Chiapas, Holloway (2005: 214) argues that to struggle through the state is 'to become involved in the active process of defeating yourself'; state power is fallacy owing to the separation of the political from the economic in capitalism. Under capitalism, it appears that power is exercised in the political realm and that the state is the centre of power whereas, in reality, it is in the economic sphere - the relations of production - where the exercise of power is inherent in the separation of labour from the means of production (Ibid: 32). Zibechi (2010: 125-128), also inspired by the Zapatistas, is similarly critical of peasant movement attempts to struggle for power within the state. He believes that state power forces social movements to delegate to a handful of representatives the defence of their interests in the state which inevitably disarms the movement and undermines its strength. Leaders are separated from their mass bases, accountability is compromised and they are co-opted. Participation in the state gives rise to a faction of peasant leader officials separated from their communities that form a new functional elite for the system of domination under the reconfigured legitimation apparatus of the neoliberal state. According to these arguments, CIOAC and FENOCIN's struggles for state power are doomed to failure from the outset. They have been fooled by the mirage of state power through their participation and integration in the state's legitimation project without seeing the other, more important side of the same coin: that this apparatus exists precisely to legitimate the state's central role in the maintenance and promotion of capital accumulation that is systematically destroying their members' livelihoods and threatening their continued existence on the land.

The problem with these arguments is that they fail to contextualise their conclusions on the basis of concrete historical analyses of social organisations' strategies which cannot simply opt in or out of incorporation into the state's apparatus of legitimation. The decision

whether or not to occupy positions of power within the state apparatus is not a simple case of yes or no; CIOAC and FENOCIN's strategies of seeking positions of influence within the state (from the end of the 1980s and mid-2000s respectively) has fundamentally reconfigured these organisation's structures - their leaderships, the class characteristics of their mass bases, and the modes of interaction between the two - in ways that significantly restrict the possibility of withdrawing from it; the legitimacy of the leaders and the expectations of the bases of both organisations have come to rest too heavily on this insertion for withdrawal to be an option. The issue at stake for these organisations is rather to manage this insertion in ways that do not dissolve or destroy their counter-hegemonic discourses and practices.

Dinerstein (2003) asks whether the apparent dilemma between seeking state power or constructing counter-power from outside of the state represents a false dichotomy. The experiences of CIOAC and FENOCIN's political strategies have certainly not been overwhelmingly positive, but this does not mean that either organisation should - or indeed could - simply stop seeking to occupy spaces within the state apparatus. In the case of CIOAC, the use of the food sovereignty discourse as a political tool forced the Fox administration to recognise its responsibilities to the countryside - something that it was intent on shedding at the beginning of its term in office. MECAM forced the state to re-open and re-configure spaces occupied by peasant organisations which, even if not accompanied by any steps towards food sovereignty in practice, has channelled essential and even life-changing resources to CIOAC's grassroots members. For FENOCIN, despite the national peasant movement's weakening as Correa's regime has consolidated, inscribing food sovereignty into the national constitution was a massive achievement that continues to be a source of political power today. The government can continually be called to account on the basis of the constitution. The current lack of concrete policies relating to food sovereignty, despite its constitutional ratification, means that it remains at the centre of political debate. Ultimately, 'food sovereignty' is as much a political strategy aimed at wresting concessions from within the neoliberal model as it is one of transforming that model, and struggles both within and outside the state are critical elements of this strategy.

Both cases demonstrate that the dilemma between power and counter-power, of occupying spaces within the state or remaining on the outside, is indeed a false one. If the organisations have been weakened, or mistakes made regarding organisational strategy, this has not followed inevitably from strategies seeking positions of power within the state.

As Bartra (2003b) contends, to change the world many things must be done, among them taking power, but avoiding that power takes us over. Mexico and Ecuador's national peasant organisations do not believe that *solely* by occupying positions of power within the state that they will be able to change the world in their image, but neither do they believe that in order to change the world they must remain at the margin of power. What they must do, first and foremost, is implement a political strategy that truly represents and develops the proposals and demands of their bases by re-establishing the link between the leadership and the grassroots. Political strategy, rather than a top-down decision by leaders, must be decided on and instigated from below. This is echoed by prominent national peasant leaders in both countries:

'I think that political positions become a type of opportunism in personal terms of securing a position of comfort, and often that can end up distancing you from the big demands of the people linked to the organisational structure. The other thing is I think that the organisations have every right to define a type of electoral strategy, but the organisations. But when someone assumes their electoral strategy, using the organisation, it shouldn't be this way. This way they end up not being the electoral strategy of the organisation, but being the organisation used for a personal strategy. That is a great problem within the organisations to make the structural changes they want and in the end the people believe that big changes can only come from the institutional perspective.' **Luis Andrango, FENOCIN president 2009-2013 (15 May 2013, Quito).**

'We are not against participation (in electoral politics), but what doesn't seem correct to us is that suddenly all the organisations turn entirely towards the electoral and it also worries us that the majority of regional leaders are now in this logic, seeking candidacies in the name of social organisations but abandoning many of their principles and tasks, most of all with regard to the strengthening of the conscience of the militancy. Some of us openly refuse to participate in electoral processes, except if this participation in a given municipality can strengthen a social organisation - not so much in terms of resources which is always difficult anyway because there aren't many - but to express a new concept of power, to become a more democratic municipality that supports organisational, social and community processes of participation and training; where there are meeting spaces for social and cultural activities. Under this vision we don't say that there isn't the possibility of putting forward a candidate for the municipal presidency. But we ask ourselves - do we have the organisational structure and capacity in place here to be able to exercise a different kind of power? If not, then better no (candidate).' **Emilio Plutarco Garcia, founding member of CNPA and part of the organisation's national council (15 February 2013, village of Atlacholoaya, municipality Xochitepec, Morelos).**

Both of the above quotes, particularly the second, concur with Harnecker's (2005: 150) argument that it is necessary to take advantage of local political spaces, not simply reject

them as some radical leftists such as Petras & Veltmeyer (2006) & Holloway (2005) do, since municipal government in the hands of the Left can play an important role in promoting the growth of leftist forces. Municipal government can potentially be used as a showcase that demonstrates the potential of socially different political projects which could become spaces that form the basis of an alternative society, one guided by the principles of food sovereignty for example. In the 'war of position' to conquer ideologically and morally the terrain of civil society and therefore gain consensus for an alternative state, an alternative society, the struggle for positions of influence within the state apparatus must be carried out simultaneously with struggles outside of and against the state.

The reality is that, in order to meet the pressing material needs of their mass bases, and already (at least partially) reconfigured at all levels by historic participation in electoral politics and struggles for state power, CIOAC and FENOCIN must continue with this strategy. However, as Bartra (2003b) contends, they must do so without their organisations becoming completely taken over by this struggle. In the cases of Mexico and Ecuador's food sovereignty movements, putting their counter-hegemonic discourses into practice must involve establishing clearly defined strategies within the organisation that come from work with the bases as to how participation within the state apparatus and in electoral processes should take place, and how this links in with the fundamental goal of both organisations to promote peasant production in the struggle for food sovereignty and the end of neoliberalism. This will require the combination of institutional with non-institutional forms of struggle for hegemony, the efficacy of which will depend on politically autonomous, 'popular-democratic' organisational structures; legitimate, democratic and truly representative leadership that articulates and develops demands from the bases into a unifying and coherent counter-hegemonic project that demands 'food sovereignty' as constructed by its grassroots bases.

In Ecuador, the relative weakening of the indigenous-peasant movement is by no means necessarily terminal; Correa's social spending - the basis of his support among subaltern classes - is built on oil exports, inherently volatile, and potentially a serious problem for his administration if world prices drop and force social programmes to be scaled back or withdrawn. The administration's strategy of by-passing social movements with limited integration of the most influential social movement leaders into AP means that, in comparison to Mexico, the relative non-interference of the state in their internal structures has left social organisations' political autonomy relatively intact. We already saw how the

indigenous-peasant movement was able to regroup as a counter-hegemonic force following its support of Gutierrez's government and there is little reason to believe that this could not happen again in the case of Correa if oil prices drop. The possibility for CIOAC, on the other hand, to develop 'popular-democratic' organisational structures and be involved in counter-hegemonic struggles is much more circumscribed by Mexico's long history of corporatism. This does not simply constrain peasant organisations' counter-hegemonic potential but, more importantly, is a constituent element of their structures, from the expectations of the bases to the actions of the leaderships. However, organisations like CIOAC cannot simply be ignored and discredited - as they are by much of the literature on the Mexican peasantry - as universally and irreversibly 'contaminated' by state corporatism, dead-ends in struggles for social transformation. The seeds of discontent are ever present among CIOAC's bases and counter-hegemonic strategies of its origins - struggles for land and labour rights in the 1970s - to the more sporadic acts of the not so distant past - land occupations in Chiapas in the mid-1990s and involvement in MECAM in 2001 - are ever present in the ideology, if not the practice, of the organisation. CIOAC's counter-hegemonic potential still exists, even if weak, latent, and heavily restricted by its structure and relationship with the Mexican state at the present historical conjuncture.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine the class dynamics, politics and ideology of ‘food sovereignty’ as a unifying discourse for peasant organisations in Mexico and Ecuador. It has looked at how and why this discourse is interpreted and exercised in different ways between and within peasant organisations of the VC. Contrary to much of the food sovereignty movement literature’s assumption of a unified ‘people of the land’ (Via Campesina, 2013), this thesis has shown that there exist important class, political and ideological differences within and between VC organisations that fundamentally shape the nature of struggles and the capacity of the movement to challenge neoliberal policies.

In spite of very different histories of agrarian reform there has been a convergence between Mexico and Ecuador in regards to rural policies under neoliberalism, leading to the emergence of food sovereignty as a guiding set of principles for national peasant movements in both countries in the 1990s. This is part of a worldwide convergence across much of the global South in the neoliberal era and the VC, like other transnational social movements that have emerged over the past two to three decades, have sought to ‘scale-up’ struggles beyond the national level in response to the increasing centralisation and mobility of capital. This scaling up has been a major factor in shaping the characteristics of transnational movements’ social bases. As de Sousa Santos (2001: 180-181) argues, the protagonists of these movements are no longer social classes, but social groups defined by collective interests. In his words, they are ‘impure’ with a heterogeneous mass base in terms of social relations and perceptions of collective action. As such, contemporary transnational social movements represent a departure from previous movements in which discourses tended to explicitly articulate class-based elements. As mentioned in the introduction, the VC’s rights based discourse has been critical for the construction of such a heterogeneous movement. It provides a shared language of struggle in an international movement so diverse in class, cultural and ideological terms. Does this change therefore confirm Slater’s (1991: 57) assertion that social movements in the neoliberal era deal with new forms of subjectivity that reveal the inappropriateness of centring notions of political change around the class imperative? For the VC – especially in its efforts to unite ‘small farmers’ in the global North with diverse peasant classes in the global South – organising around notions of class would seem particularly challenging, maybe even counter-productive, for the construction of a politically strong international movement capable of challenging the neoliberal food regime. However, while the discursive construction of unity

and a shared rights based framework for mobilisation and demand-making may constitute an effective political strategy for such a broad-based movement, the current lack of engagement with class processes within the VC means that its universalising claims risk concealing exclusionary practices. Rural labour and the landless in Mexico and Ecuador's VC organisations have little if any influence in shaping the VC's political strategy yet are claimed to be represented by the movement's all encompassing language of a unified 'people of the land'.

Important differences within and between peasant organisations as to how 'food sovereignty' is interpreted and struggled for tend to be ignored or concealed by the movement and its proponents in an effort to promote the image of a homogenous peasantry united in its opposition to the neoliberal food regime. While this effort may have political objectives, it reduces the movement's transformative potential by failing to address real causes of division and conflict. If such differences were addressed they could potentially be overcome to the benefit of the VC and its capacity to shape food and agricultural policies in favour of rural groups and classes currently confronting unprecedented forces of proletarianisation, immiseration and dispossession. As Borras et al (2008) rightly state, engaging with the complexities, contradictions, ambiguities and internal tensions that exist within rural movements is essential for advancing their transformative political projects.

We saw in chapter one how processes of agrarian reform in Mexico and Ecuador have, in very different ways and to very different extents, shaped the agrarian structures of both countries and the emergence and development of their national peasant movements. I showed in chapter two how the class characteristics of CIOAC and FENOCIN's mass bases were transformed by their own struggles for land. In both cases landless peasants and rural labourers became small producers occupying land on the basis of social property relations in Mexico and as cooperatives that would later be divided into individual plots as de facto private property in Ecuador. This, in turn, has shifted the nature of peasant movement demands, the classes they represent, under-represent, and don't represent at all, and alliances and conflicts between and within national peasant organisations. The specific nature of peasant organisations' demands for food sovereignty is heavily shaped by the historical development of their class bases and their relationships with national states and governments. As the class composition of CIOAC and FENOCIN's bases became progressively dominated by landed members over the course of the land reform era, the

interests and demands of the landless were increasingly under-represented. As a result, both organisations' demands for food sovereignty fail to incorporate the specific interests of rural labour as both distinct a class as well as a class fraction of semi-proletarianised peasants that depend to varying degrees on the labour market for their reproduction.

The challenge of combining landed with landless struggles has proven extremely difficult for both CIOAC and FENOCIN. One reason for this is the shifting class compositions of both organisations' mass bases towards a predominantly landed membership. However, the complete abandonment of the landless by both organisations is not a simple case of focusing scarce organisational resources on the majority. The interests of the landed peasantry may conflict with those of the landless making the construction of a shared platform of struggle particularly difficult, but also extremely important, for peasant movement strategies at all levels of organisation. CIOAC's national leadership rejects outright tentative government proposals to oblige all rural employers - including the organisation's own marginalised coffee growers employing workers for a few weeks per year - to contribute to social security payments for their workers. FENOCIN's land law initiative was drafted and delivered without any input from workers on plantations whose jobs would be lost if proposed expropriation limits were applied.

For the VC to legitimately represent the diverse rural classes that it claims to, it must seriously address the potentially conflicting interests that exist within and between landed and landless peasant classes. At present, the VC in Mexico and Ecuador under-represents the landless, rural labour and cash crop producers and cannot legitimately claim to represent all 'people of the land' in these countries. The lack of representation of these rural classes and class fractions means that some of the most marginalised rural producers lack voice within the VC's structures to articulate their visions and shape discourses and demands for food sovereignty from the national to the international level. Although I demonstrated in chapter two that neither CIOAC's nor FENOCIN's landed members are interested in organizing around the labour element of their reproduction strategies, this does not imply that rural labour per se (fully proletarianised landless rural labour in particular) is uninterested in organizing around work. Recent mobilizations in March 2015 by rural unions in northern Mexico (San Quintín, Baja California – see the recent issue of *Jornada del Campo*, number 94, July 2015) and the ongoing unionizing work of FENACLE on banana plantations in Ecuador are just two examples of important labour struggles that do not find voice and representation within the VC. The latter must engage with labour issues

within its existing organizations and establish links with rural unions much more if it is to more fully represent some of the poorest rural classes and strengthen the 'unity in diversity' that it promotes.

Although class interests within the VC may be opposed as they stand this is not to suggest that they are inherently contradictory, inevitably incompatible, as structuralist notions of class may suggest. Returning to the debate between McMichael and Bernstein in the recent edition of the *Journal of Peasant Studies* (2014, issue 6), and in agreement with Jansen's (2015: 227) assertion, the two sides of the discussion do not need to be mutually exclusive. As McMichael (2006: 476) argues, the corporate food regime catalyses a new agrarian question infused with, but not reducible to, class relations. The new agrarian question is constituted on the basis of an alternative politics and beliefs about what is possible on the land, a transformation against the accumulation imperative (Ibid: 2008: 210). McMichael (2014: 196) situates the food sovereignty movement as the archetypal 'counter-movement' as peasantries mobilise, and invert their designation as historical relic to historical subject, thereby defying the limitations of an objectifying capital lens. However, as Bernstein (2010: 121) argues, the unity of this counter-movement cannot be assumed but would have to be constructed from class diverse rural organisations. The construction of multiple alternatives must actively seek to unite such diverse rural classes and groups that the FSM currently under-represents or fails to represent at all. The almost complete lack of representation of the landless/rural labourers is a major problem that both weakens the VC's potential to contest the neoliberal food regime and undermines the movement's ability to unify all marginalised people of the land. Even if, as McMichael (2006 & 2008) tacitly attests, peasant differentiation has been superseded by peasant pauperisation across all levels under the corporate food regime (Lerche, 2013: 384), immiseration is experienced differently between and within social classes and groups. Unity of response cannot be assumed but must be actively constructed from subaltern classes' and groups' multiple experiences of neoliberalism. The ideological project of the FSM claims to be doing this but is weakened by its exclusion of some of the most marginalised rural classes that it supposedly represents under its banner of 'unity in diversity'.

McMichael's (2007; 2008; 2014) assumption of a 'unified people of the land' obscures and under-emphasises class dynamics within peasant movements and in processes of agrarian change more broadly. However, Bernstein's (2001; 2006; 2014) more structural (or 'proletarianist') understanding of class based on the capital/labour dichotomy and the

tendency towards differentiation is also limited in its analytical potential and practical significance for policy proposals and movement strategies. As shown in chapter three, struggles for autonomy demonstrate the role of peasant agency in resisting processes of dispossession and proletarianisation. Rather than the passive victims of external forces of capitalist development, land ownership provides a space for the construction of relative autonomy from and within the market. This allows non-(commodity) market dependent peasants to practice diverse production and reproduction strategies and adapt them in dynamic ways in response to changing conditions in commodity and labour markets. They may be integrated into capitalist markets, but the tendency towards differentiation is blocked or inhibited because they are not completely dependent on only one of these markets for their reproduction.

The ways in which CIOAC and FENOCIN's members struggle for autonomy - both from and within the market - highlight the importance of class consciousness in shaping peasant struggles. They also demonstrate the limitations of more structuralist understandings of class for interpreting contemporary struggles for food sovereignty. Autonomous struggles cast light on the limitations of Bernstein's (2006) agrarian question of labour thesis in which he argues that today's land struggles are driven by experiences of fragmentation of labour and the increasing scarcity of employment that pays a living wage. Negative experiences in the labour market - the increasingly informal, oppressive and scarce sources of wage work - certainly contribute to contemporary peasant struggles. As I showed in chapter three, a central element of CIOAC and FENOCIN's members' reproduction strategies revolves around minimising labour market integration. However, this is only one side of the story. More important is the role of class consciousness which, in the case of both organisations' members, is more 'peasant' than 'worker'. Their struggles revolve around the achievement of viable production on the land as a central element of how they define themselves, of who they are. The positive associations tied to landed production are more important than negative interpretations of wage labour in driving contemporary peasant demands for land and food sovereignty. These demands are not limited to control of territory for material production and reproduction, but extend to the very definition of land itself (Nugent & Alonso, 1994: 246) and to issues of social and environmental justice regarding how land is used. For CIOAC and FENOCIN, land is more than simply material; it is inseparable from their members' identity, labour and cultural practices. In both organisations the political formation of class - the process by which groups, classes and communities define their demands (or objects of struggle), construct organisations to defend and promote their

interests, and establish alliances with other organisations (Otero, 2004a: 41) - revolves much more around the land and the injustices wrought by neoliberal rural policies in terms of abandonment of state support for the peasant sector and market liberalisation, than it does around labour market dynamics.

Taking into account both the insights and the limitations of agrarianist and proletarianist approaches, in chapter three I tried to develop the concept of struggles for relative autonomy from and within the market as a theoretical approach to understanding the class based nature of the food sovereignty movement. Under neoliberalism CIOAC and FENOCIN's (landed) mass bases, like those of other VC organisations across the global South, have found it increasingly difficult to make a viable living from the land. Neoliberal policies have favoured the most capitalised producers to the detriment of most peasant classes, from the landless and land-poor to those with a relatively high degree of market integration that benefited from state support during the ISI period. Forces of dispossession and the tendency for the mass of the peasantry to undergo accelerated processes of proletarianisation have increased significantly in the era of neoliberal globalisation. However, proletarianisation is a tendency, not an inevitable consequence of capitalist development. The struggles of CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers for relative autonomy from and within the market show how neoliberalism is resisted on the ground. The production and reproduction strategies of both organisations' producers represent fluid and dynamic responses to neoliberal market forces. These responses are based on shifting patterns of household labour use that minimise exposure to volatile market forces and can successfully resist proletarianisation. The struggle for autonomy may resist not only proletarianisation, but also the full commodification of household production and therefore complete market dependence. As such, a production logic based on retaining land access to secure long-term survival prevails over a logic of efficient production along capitalist lines.

I also showed in chapter three how CIOAC's coffee growers and FENOCIN's Andean peasants use money earned through wage employment and remittances to maintain subsistence plots that, in purely financial terms, would appear irrational, better spent on purchasing food for household consumption from the market. Land is not simply a refuge, increasingly the only remaining source of livelihood for those unable to find employment that pays a living wage (Bernstein, 2006: 13). It is imbued with social and cultural meanings that cannot be reduced to a simple economic calculus alone. The production and reproduction strategies of CIOAC and FENOCIN peasants are geared towards sustaining and

increasing land access and viability, even if this would appear to be a poor 'investment', or unprofitable, under capitalist rationality. Their struggles for a space of relative autonomy from and within the market are not only a response to forces of dispossession, proletarianisation and immiseration under neoliberalism. The relative autonomy that land access confers also contrasts with the complete lack of autonomy that characterises the labour market. This is not an entirely novel development under neoliberalism. Both organisations' members fought for land in the 1960s and 1970s against landowner oppression and control of the means of production. Contemporary autonomous struggles are influenced by these past experiences and the successful struggles of older generations to control not only the land they worked, but also their own labour. Retaining control of both the labour process and the land is a central aspect of CIOAC and FENOCIN members' struggles for autonomy today. These same peasants show a distinct lack of interest in labour organising; rather than struggling to improve working conditions they are attempting to reduce or eliminate entirely their integration into the labour market by instead seeking better returns for landed production. In the case of CIOAC, members have actively broken agreements with landowners that would have improved their incomes and living conditions because they value participation in the cultures and ceremonial practices of their home communities - inextricably tied to landed production - over the possibility of improving their experiences in the labour market.

Social class - politically understood - is therefore central to FSM dynamics and struggles. This makes McMichael's (2006: 412) reframing of the contemporary agrarian question as one of 'peasant resistance' in opposition to neoliberalism a problem. It assumes a unity (also projected by the VC and its slogan of 'unity in diversity') within and between national VC organisations that currently does not exist, at least in the cases of Mexico and Ecuador. We have seen how peasant centrals in Mexico represent some of the most marginalised producers in the country whose production and reproduction strategies are geared towards retaining relative autonomy from the market. Their leaders work on the basis that significant improvements to their member's lives can be achieved through increased engagement with state programmes, not opposition towards them. ANEC (National Association of Commercialising Enterprises), on the other hand, represents more market dependent 'entrepreneurial' producers. The organisation's struggle for structural changes, withdrawal from NAFTA in particular, is seen as the only possible strategy for transforming the lives of their members. Although both organisations subscribe to the VC and its guiding principle of food sovereignty, how this is interpreted and the political strategies they follow

are heavily shaped by the class characteristics of their mass bases. As a result, there has been open conflict and a complete lack of joint work between the two organisations since the VC's arrival in Mexico in 1996. Similarly in Ecuador, although not to the same extent, FENOCIN's land law proposal was contested by FENACLE (National Federation of Agroindustrial Workers) as the latter was concerned that the agricultural labourers that compose the major element of its mass base would lose their jobs - and FENACLE its unions - if plantations were redistributed.

I also showed in chapter three how the interests of marginalised cash crop producers, like those of the landless and rural workers, are not currently being addressed by the FSM. In terms of the VC, this is linked to the movement's ambiguous stance on export production. The VC's 2007 Nyéléni declaration states that the movement is fighting so that 'all peoples, nations and states are able to determine their own food producing systems'. However, its stance remains that 'food sovereignty prioritizes local and national economies and markets', even if it 'promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples' (Via Campesina, 2007). The role of trade remains ambiguous and cash crop producers under-represented within the VC despite the importance of commercial production for the majority of marginalised peasants in Mexico, Ecuador, and across the global South. Peasant struggles for autonomy - both from and within commodity markets - and the logic of household production and reproduction strategies are heavily shaped by cash crop production. To represent their interests within the FSM the struggles and demands of such producers must be actively incorporated into the VC's discourses and practices. Engagement with various forms of struggles for autonomy within the market, and the principles on which these struggles are based, could be a useful starting point.

The experiences of CIOAC and FENOCIN's coffee and cacao growers demonstrate that these producers often struggle as much to influence their markets as they do to escape from their most unpredictable, potentially proletarianising, characteristics. Their struggles for an element of control over production and marketing of export crops already falls within the VC's broader struggles for democratisation of agriculture, of returning power to producers (and consumers) from agribusiness TNCs supported by the neoliberal state system. The majority of CIOAC and FENOCIN's producers do not wish to, and in many cases physically could not, shift focus from export to staples production. They instead seek voice and influence in the markets they already occupy and the VC needs to do more to support such struggles through its discourse and actions. At present, the issue of coffee and cacao

transnational exporters entering into production and buying agreements with peasants across southern Mexico and coastal Ecuador is not being addressed by CIOAC, FENOCIN, or the VC at any level. Acting as individual producers, communities, or at best cooperatives, the highly unequal power relations on which these arrangements are based have potentially serious consequences for peasants that enter into them; they risk losing autonomy both from and within their markets and becoming dependent on TNE supplied inputs which, if revoked in the case of TNE relocation, could destroy production. Despite its potential significance for peasant livelihoods neither organisation, nor the VC at the level of Mexico, Ecuador, Latin America or internationally, have sought to engage with emerging dynamics in peasant cash crop markets despite their centrality to peasant production and reproduction strategies. The terms of the agreements between TNEs and coffee and cacao growers are a constant area of struggle. Organisational engagement with the issue across its bases and support with TNE negotiations could potentially be of great benefit to isolated producer groups currently negotiating on an individual basis with little or no previous experience of doing so. Coffee and cacao TNEs are claiming to provide significant opportunities to improve production and incomes for many marginalised producers for the first time in the neoliberal era. Failing to address the concerns of peasants considering entering into or already part of TNE agreements, coupled with the real threats that such agreements pose to their autonomy both now and in the future, risks losing their support and weakening the relevance of food sovereignty to producers of cash crops.

The considerable challenge of representing diverse peasant classes within an organisation or movement is further complicated by the role of the state in promoting and defending the neoliberal food regime and the relationships it has developed with organised opposition. In the introduction to this thesis, Borras et al's (2008) research questions were put forward as a guide to this research (see page 12). These questions have been engaged with in different ways, and to different extents, throughout the preceding chapters. However, the responses to all of these questions are heavily influenced by the role of the state. As such, any research into rural social movements that seeks to assess or further their transformative political projects must also examine in depth the relationship between peasant organisations and the state at all levels.

State-peasant movement relations heavily shape agrarian structures, the class characteristics of peasant organisations' mass bases, and their demands. As I showed in chapter four, the state's attempts to neutralise the counter-hegemonic potential of social

movements by partially incorporating peasant organisations' leaders and demands into its apparatus is a major cause of division and conflict within and between peasant organisations. The strategic channelling of state resources and political positions to subaltern organisations and their leaders is also a major cause of conflict between national peasant organisations, even those that share common class characteristics and interests.

Much of the FSM literature (McMichael, 2006 & 2008; Rosset, 2011; Teubal, 2010) focuses on peasant resistance against the neoliberal food regime without examining how a central element in this regime - the neoliberal state - engages with and attempts to neutralise this resistance in ways that dramatically influence the FSM's transformative potential. Many peasant organisations, especially those in Mexico, are currently in a very weak position to transform the neoliberal model as a result of the neoliberal attack on the countryside and the Mexican state's neo-corporatist policies. These organisations use the discourse of food sovereignty and their membership of the VC much more as a political tool than as a transformative project. This is not to deny food sovereignty's usefulness for organisations like CIOAC; it has been employed by the Mexican peasant movement to wrest important material concessions from the state for a mass of the Mexican peasantry struggling to survive. It is simply to highlight the fact that assuming that a counter-hegemonic discourse of food sovereignty is synonymous with a transformative political project can vastly misinterpret and exaggerate movement claims. As central stated goal of the VC is to restore democratic local and national food systems (McMichael, 2014: 195) yet, as this thesis has shown, democratic organisational structures and practices within the movement cannot be assumed as they are currently by the vast majority of proponents of food sovereignty. Democratic forms of representation and accountability within social organisations are taken for granted in much of the contemporary social movement literature yet must be investigated rather than being assumed.

For Mexican VC members, the food sovereignty discourse is constructed on the basis of a rejection of NAFTA and state withdrawal from the peasant sector, an 'ideal opposite' to Mexico's neoliberal model. The 2000 movement 'El Campo No Aguanta Mas' (MECAM) was discursively and ideologically guided by food sovereignty. It prevented the Mexican state from completely abandoning the countryside to a liberalised market and represented an important victory for the organisations involved. However, most of these organisations were never struggling for 'food sovereignty' as an alternative socio-economic model from the outset. They were using the FSM's unifying principles as a political tool to demand

access to the neoliberal state's apparatus of legitimation, not to transform it. In Ecuador, on the other hand, the national indigenous-peasant movement had, up until 2006, had a far greater transformative potential than its Mexican counterpart. 'Food sovereignty' was enshrined in the 2008 constitution and there was widespread belief among rural subaltern classes that an agrarian revolution founded on the ideals of the food sovereignty movement would follow. However, the consolidation of Correa's presidency, the increasing concentration of power in the executive, and the support that the AP (Country Alliance) government has received from wide sectors of Ecuadorian society have all allowed Correa to shape rural policy in favour of transnational capital and against the demands of the organisations that brought him to power. Nevertheless, while the FSM's transformative potential may have been dramatically weakened as a result, the use of the food sovereignty discourse remains a powerful political tool that can always be drawn upon to hold government to account. This is especially the case as the term is enshrined in the constitution as defined by the organisations themselves. Failure on the part of government to institute policies geared towards achieving food sovereignty in Ecuador can be contested by rural movements for being unconstitutional and therefore acting against the country's legal framework and the national interest. In both Mexico and Ecuador the discourse of 'food sovereignty' acts as a common discursive framework and set of guiding and unifying principles for peasant organisations to organise and develop political opposition to neoliberalism.

In chapter four I also argued that one of the central factors that shape state-peasant movement relations and the transformative potential of the FSM is a peasant organisation's internal structure. By 'internal structure' I referred to the different roles and levels of leadership, the characteristics of the mass base, and the modes of interaction and representation between the two. Despite its importance for promoting or restricting the development of counter-hegemony, peasant organisations' internal structures and forms of representation remain understudied in the FSM literature. However, accountability cannot be assumed. Nor can it be assumed that the words and actions of leaders are unmediated transmissions flowing from the bases. This is even more the case following the neoliberal restructuring of the state's apparatus of legitimation in Mexico and Ecuador which has drawn peasant leaders into official positions of power, typically within the state bureaucracy or via electoral politics through alliances with political parties.

In both CIOAC and FENOCIN, there has been a growing physical and ideological separation between leaders and the bases as the former - and their organisations' political strategies more generally - have come to focus ever more on occupying positions within the state. This has come at the expense of grassroots organising and the construction of political proposals and strategies through dialogue with their members. CIOAC, from its origins, has always had a centralised power structure but in the land struggle era its leaders were relatively more embedded in their home communities and accountable to their members. Even if relatively undemocratic, the ideological construction of communities of struggle united against landowners and their allies in the state forged long-lasting unity between leaders and the bases. As the organisation has become ever more dependent on electoral politics to provide state resources to its members, and struggles against the state have been effectively substituted for struggles within it, allegiance between CIOAC's members and leaders at all levels has tended to become more pragmatic and ephemeral. For many members, ongoing support depends on resource access and allegiance may shift to other peasant organisations if access is jeopardised or cut. In the case of FENOCIN, historically relatively more democratic internally than CIOAC, the failure of leaders to adequately represent the interests of more market-integrated coastal producers with focus instead on more subsistence-oriented Andean peasants, has allowed Correa to garner significant support from the former. FENOCIN's national leadership attempted to occupy positions of power within AP and the state bureaucracy following Correa's rise to power in 2006. They did so with the expectation of being able to shape policy from within the state, but it has also distanced leaders from their support bases in the Andes. Even among its Andean members, FENOCIN's traditional region of influence, members are turning away from actively supporting their organisation as many believe that Correa is now 'on their side'.

Given analysis of the experiences of CIOAC and FENOCIN with their respective national states, I hope to have shown that examination of the internal structures of FSM organisations is an important yet currently neglected area of research. Only through such analysis can the transformative potential of these organisations be gauged and understood. From such analysis scholars and advocates of food sovereignty may learn from organisational forms and practices of representation that have yielded positive results which could be disseminated and transferred between organisations of the VC. In light of this, Borras et al's (2008) second research question - 'what is the social base of the movements - which social classes, groups and sectors do they represent (claim to represent or not represent at all)?' - should also ask - 'and how do the internal structures of these

movements shape their political strategies and promote or inhibit their transformative projects?' Organisations with very similar class characteristics can follow very different political strategies as a result of their internal structures and the historical relationships they have developed with the state.

Analysis of peasant organisations' internal structures and their relationship with the state is not only important analytically, but also for its potential practical significance for movement politics. Within CIOAC, for instance, the internal structure of its state level organisation in Guerrero is very different to that of Chiapas or Oaxaca. In villages that I visited in the mountains of Guerrero, CIOAC committees are responsible for administering state community projects and coordinate past and present beneficiaries in an attempt to maximise projects' effectiveness. They share experiences within communities and democratically and transparently manage state resource access in a way that minimises opportunism, namely people wanting to join the organisation simply for personal gain. Active involvement in the organisation is required, for example participation in mobilisations at the state and national levels, attendance at CIOAC meetings, and helping administer and share knowledge regarding community projects. This contrasts with communities I visited in Chiapas and Oaxaca where CIOAC leaders are much more integrated into the PRD political party and where project delivery as a vote buying strategy is more important than instituting practices to maximise project impact. However, owing to the pyramidal structure of the organisation there is little or no communication between different state leaderships. If there were, CIOAC Guerrero's community model for administering projects could be adapted and applied to other states to the potential benefit of much of the organisation's membership. Similarly in Ecuador, the lack of coordination and joint work between provincial organisations weakens both FENOCIN's transformative potential as well as its ability to materially improve the lives of its members. UROCAL (Regional Union of Coastal Peasants), a FENOCIN organisation on the Ecuadorian coast with over 20 years' experience with certified cacao and banana production, could potentially provide much needed technical support and training to FENOCIN's less productively consolidated coastal organisations. However, it has never engaged in joint work with AACH (Artisan Association of Chucaple) or UNOCYPP (Northwest Union of Peasant Organisations of Pichincha), cacao producing organisations in Esmeraldas and Pichincha respectively, far less productively developed than UROCAL and with little or no experience seeking alternative markets. As with CIOAC, FENOCIN's internal structure lacks institutionalised mechanisms for sharing knowledge and expertise among its bases that could potentially

improve members' lives, increase solidarity within, and strengthen the organisation as a social and political force.

In addition to the class dynamics and internal structures of VC organizations, gender analysis of the movement – although not carried out as part of this research – is a critical area for further investigation. The VC at the international level focuses a great deal on rural gender inequalities that are often exacerbated by neoliberal policies and its core principles and commitments are constructed on the basis of full and equal rights of women. However, in the case of national level VC organisations in Mexico and Ecuador, decision-making structures are dominated by men from national level leaderships to municipal and community level committees. At the level of the household, the struggles for autonomy from and within the market analysed in chapter three are also heavily (and unequally) shaped by gender relations. Male heads of households tend to dominate decision-making with regard to production and reproduction strategies and the majority of those that migrate to distant labour markets are men, leaving women to work the family land and raise children. How gender dynamics shape struggle for food sovereignty at all levels therefore merits much more research.

Although the food sovereignty literature tends to under-address the role of the state and peasant organisations' internal structures, few writers of agrarian movements would, as Holloway (2005) and Zibechi (2010) do, reject the importance of seeking to shape state policy from within its apparatus. For peasant organisations like CIOAC and FENOCIN it is not a simple case of with or against the state (i.e. Holloway, 2005). A more nuanced political strategy is not only required, but also demanded by their bases. And it is certainly not the case that seeking to influence the state from within is an inevitable failure; the inclusions of food sovereignty in Ecuador's 2008 constitution and the importance of MECAM in forcing the Mexican state to provide at least some form of support to the peasantry demonstrate not only the achievements that working within the state can achieve, but also how the lives of peasant organisations' members can be improved through such engagement. However, on their own, struggles within the state are limited in their capacity to bring about significant changes to marginalised peasant classes. As I demonstrated in chapter four, the state's apparatus of legitimation serves precisely to achieve the relative societal consent for the neoliberal accumulation model systematically destroying the peasant economy and peasant livelihoods. As such, institutional struggles must be combined with non-institutional forms that challenge state power while simultaneously seeking to strategically

occupy official sites within the state apparatus as a means of accessing resources and shaping policy.

CIOAC, FENOCIN, and the vast majority of peasant organisations at all levels in Mexico and Ecuador are at least partially constituted by the state. Their discourses, demands and strategies are heavily shaped by their interactions with the state in ways that prevent an outright rejection of seeking influence within its apparatus. Forms and processes of state engagement are not simply decided by leaderships autonomous from their bases. This is not to underplay the importance that leaders have in directing organisational strategies in ways that do not always necessarily have the full support, or even knowledge, of their members. However, they are still ultimately accountable to grassroots bases that have in most cases come to demand and expect state resources in the form of projects and programmes. Access to these is facilitated by engagement with the state, not rejection of it. The increasing integration of peasant leaders into official positions within the state, especially following neoliberal restructuring, was projected to their members as a necessary step in the advancement of their historical struggles. To varying degrees within and between peasant organisations, leaders' legitimacy in the eyes of their members has come to rest on retaining and expanding this integration. Having successfully won land as a result of their own struggles, CIOAC and FENOCIN came to demand resources to enable newly landed peasants to make a viable living from it. It was widely believed that these resources could be more effectively accessed through gaining organisational presence and influence within the state apparatus as opposed to remaining on the outside. To suggest that such a strategy was and is doomed to failure from the outset ignores or discredits the often life changing achievements that such integration has achieved. It is also of little practical use strategically for organisations struggling for food sovereignty that cannot simply choose to opt in or out of pursuing influence within official channels. Of more benefit is analysis of specific forms of state engagement (heavily influenced by organisations' internal structures) that promote the maintenance of political autonomy vis-à-vis the state and political parties and that combine institutional with non-institutional struggles in ways that maximise the advancement of subaltern groups' demands and their organisations' internal solidarity, mobilisational capacity, and alliance building with other similar groups in counter-hegemonic struggles.

The preceding discussion has highlighted the importance of class dynamics, the FSM's under and lack of representation of important social classes and groups, the significance of

autonomous struggles in the neoliberal era, and the centrality of the state and organisational structures in shaping peasant movement demands and strategies. What then is the role of the VC in engaging with these issues and furthering the food sovereignty movement's transformative political project? As Demarais (2007: 8) states, 'the Via Campesina's international efforts have led to important shifts in the debate around food and agriculture'. For peasant leaders in Mexico and Ecuador the valuable contribution of the VC is widely recognised; it is heralded for encouraging transnational peasant solidarity by bringing together diverse experiences of resistance against the proletarianising and immiserating forces of neoliberal capitalism. It is similarly valued for contextualising national struggles within the wider international context. However, for the organisations that compose the movement, the nation state remains the central focus of demand making and the site to which most organisational work is directed. The VC, while encouraging unity at the international level through its international and regional level conferences, must do more to encourage joint action between member organisations at the national levels.

The difficulties of achieving the unity required for sustained joint action among VC organisations with different class bases has already been recognised by Borras (2004) in the case of the Philippines. However, it is of critical importance if the movement is to successfully reverse neoliberal policies. At present, joint work among VC members does not take place at all in the case of Mexico, and in Ecuador it is limited to periodic meetings among the national leaderships of VC member organisations with little or no dissemination of the VC's work among these organisations' bases. Currently, peasant organisations in both countries articulate with the VC at the international level effectively on an individual basis without engaging in any form of combined action nationally. Although the food sovereignty discourse fed into the demands of MECAM in Mexico in 2000, the VC played no active organisational role in the movement. Nor was it present in FENOCIN's land law initiative or in the drafting of the constitution. Given that the nation state remains the central focus for these organisations, joint work between VC organisations at the national level could potentially yield significant benefits. This is not to underplay the importance of class, political and ideological differences that, as we have seen, are often a major source of conflict between these organisations. Despite these, the fact remains - and this is recognised by peasant leaders themselves - that there are important shared interests between them which could form the basis of a platform of unity. MECAM in Mexico and the Constituent Assembly in Ecuador are just two obvious examples of this potential. However,

one of the major obstacles to bringing this about, in addition to the factors already discussed, is the very structure and working practices of the VC itself.

Rather than encouraging debate and the construction of shared agendas as equal partners, the VC disseminates information and organises its activities through one national 'coordinator' organisation in each country. The coordinator - UNORCA in Mexico and FENOCIN in Ecuador - acts as both a gatekeeper to other national VC organisations and a kind of chairman of the VC at the national level. This creates a lack of trust and transparency in addition to non-gatekeeper organisations' sense of being subordinates in the VC's projects. Such heavy reliance on one coordinator organisation, as is the case at present, does not foster unity but on the contrary encourages disagreements and disengagement with the VC. This issue was also raised by Borras (2004) with regard to India where the national coordinator organisation's discretionary control over granting VC membership and disseminating information was criticised by other Indian peasant organisations. However, the VC's structures and working practices have remained fundamentally the same since Borras raised the issue over ten years ago. This is to the detriment of the movement at national and international levels.

The combination of Mexico's clientelistic political culture and the VC's structure based on disseminating information through a single coordinator organisation in each country has exacerbated the difficulty of fostering inter-organisational unity. While UNORCA may formally occupy the role of national coordinator, control of the VC in Mexico is in reality in the hands (and office) of one of its former national presidents. Despite the protestations of Mexico's VC organisations (apart from UNORCA which, while not publicly renouncing the actions of its former president, are nonetheless critical of his actions internally) at international VC meetings, the international secretariat has done nothing to resolve the issue. As a result, no national level VC meetings take place in Mexico, no attempts are made to construct joint platforms of struggle, and the country's VC organisations have grown increasingly critical of the international movement's structures and working practices.

'The problem with the VC is that it is a hierarchical, authoritarian organisation...the agenda of the VC is correct as it stands, but its structure and workings reproduce the systems of exclusion that the peasants and their organisations already experience in the neoliberal system and our simulated democracies'. **Victor Suarez, ANEC's Executive Director (8 February 2013, Mexico City).**

Despite regular meetings between the leaderships of Ecuador's VC organisations in which the VC's work is disseminated and national level activities are proposed and discussed, the structure of the VC is still seen by most member organisations as undemocratic, opaque, and an obstacle to unified action. There is widespread criticism of FENOCIN's position as national coordinator and the non-transparent nature of its relationship with the international secretariat.

'FENOCIN has had its merits as the representative of the VC in Ecuador, but it has also monopolised the opportunities that come with it (the role) and international presence. It's something that the VC must analyse internally; the coordination should be much more participative. The VC has helped us with training courses, but we are invited via FENOCIN and don't know how places on the courses are distributed or who shapes the contents of the training. This is something that the VC has to regulate and open up...it has to rotate the coordinator'. **José Agualsaca, National President of the FEI (10 April 2013, Quito).**

Restructuring the VC at the national level in order to promote joint action, in addition to addressing rather than ignoring its internal tensions and issues of representation, is of paramount importance if the VC is to successfully reverse and 'denaturalise' the advance of neoliberalism and its forces of dispossession, immiseration, and ecological devastation (McMichael, 2007). Under the ongoing expansion and deepening of neoliberal food and agricultural policies, the production and reproduction strategies of 'the peasantry', and its place and role more generally in contemporary processes of agrarian change in Mexico, Ecuador, and Latin America more broadly, has become increasingly diverse and complex. Some peasants may be dispossessed as neoliberal capitalism develops, but others may resist dispossession through organised political resistance, their own autonomous struggles, and/or via arrangements with capital that may subsume peasant labour through hybrid forms that consolidate peasant livelihoods (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010: 182). The search for alternatives to the impoverishing and environmentally catastrophic neoliberal food regime requires the FSM and its proponents to recognise the differentiated and often conflicting responses, interests and political projects of subaltern rural classes (Jansen, 2015: 227) and their organisations. On the basis of this understanding must develop the construction, from below, of cross-class platforms and programmes of struggle truly inclusive and representative of the diverse social groups and classes whose livelihoods are becoming increasingly difficult to reproduce due to the unprecedented proletarianising and immiserating forces of neoliberalism. This is much easier said than done, but it is nevertheless critical if we are to deal with the multiple social and environmental crises that

stem from the neoliberal model of food and agriculture.

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Appendix 1: Interview Template for Production and Reproduction Strategies.

How did you come to access your land? How much land do you have? How is it used (i.e. subsistence/cash-crop/pasture/other)? How has this changed over time and why?

How many family members do you have? Where do they live and work? (For off-farm family work) Do you/your family work off-farm? Who, where, when and for how long (seasonal, permanent, part-time, full-time, and change over time)? What are the pay and conditions like? Why do people leave and would they prefer to stay? Why do you stay on the land? Does/should CIOAC/FENOCIN represent those that leave to work off-farm?

Subsistence cultivation - what do you produce and do you produce a surplus or deficit for household needs? What do you do with excess/how do you meet deficit? How has this changed over time and why? Do you use inputs, why/why not, and where do they come from? Is fragmentation and soil exhaustion a problem and how has this changed over time? Do you want/need more land? How does CIOAC/FENOCIN deal with these issues?

Coffee and cacao: How much do you produce? Where/to whom do you sell it? In what form/level of processing? Why? How old are our plants and how much do you reinvest in quality and productivity improvement as percentage of income coffee/cacao generates? Do you have access to credit and how do you use it? CIOAC/FENOCIN's strategy in the sector/benefits received through your organisation's struggles in terms of access to state programmes, production and marketing support? Do you have experience with alternative markets? Why/why not? What benefits and problems have you experienced in these markets and change over time? Would you like to produce organic/Fair Trade coffee/cacao or begin processing your beans? What are the entry barriers? How have prices changed over time and how has this affected our production strategies? What is your experience with intermediaries/TNEs in the sector? What are the biggest issues facing the coffee/cacao sectors and how should they be resolved?

What is your experience with state productive projects and programmes and change over time? How does CIOAC/FENOCIN influence access to these and their forms?

Have you had experience working with TNEs? Describe - risks/benefits/problems. Why did you enter agreements with them? When? How did it first start? What are your plans for the

future in terms of coffee / cacao production? How do you predict the situation will change for producers and why?

Appendix 2: Interview Template for Political and Social Issues.

Why did you join CIOAC/FENOCIN? When? Describe our history with the organisation and its struggles? What have been the benefits of joining / what changes have CIOAC/FENOCIN's struggles brought about? Why do people join now? Is the rationale the same as when you first joined?

Are there other peasant organisations in the community/municipality? Describe the relationship and change over time. Have there been any internal divisions within CIOAC/FENOCIN here? Why?

Did you struggle for land? Describe the process? Why did the land struggle end and will it ever be renewed? Why/why not?

After the land struggle focus, what has become CIOAC/FENOCIN's central focus of struggle? How have you participated? What successes/failures have you seen? What does the organisation's commitment to food sovereignty mean to you?

What is the difference between the CIOAC and the PRD / FENOCIN and the PSM? How does the relationship work between the two? Should CIOAC/FENOCIN leaders be involved in electoral politics? Why/why not? Are leaders accessible to you or hard to reach?

Is CIOAC/FENOCIN a democratic organisation? How and why / why not? How are the demands and needs of people in the communities transmitted and expressed by the organisation? How are leaderships at all levels decided upon? How often do you attend CIOAC/FENOCIN meetings and what issues are discussed? Who decides on the issues?

Which state social programmes/projects do you receive here? Opinions. How did / do you gain access to them? Can you / CIOAC/FENOCIN influence in the design of the projects/programmes?

How is your organisation's political strategy and focus of struggle created and disseminated, food sovereignty in particular? Do members shape organisational struggles and strategies?

What mobilisations have you participated in? Why? What happened and what were the results?