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The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Political Science Department

# **Rebel Movements & Autonomy: “A Similar Path, divergent Outcomes”**

**A Comparative Analysis between the Zapatista Movement in Mexico, The Kurdish Movement in Turkey & The Polisario Front in Morocco**

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## *Abstract*

This thesis explores the factors that can explain why some rebel movements attain territorial autonomy while others do not. This was studied through a cross-regional comparison of three movements, the Zapatista movement in Mexico, the Kurdish movement in Turkey and the Polisario Front in Morocco. These cases were chosen with the aim to present a causal inference of their divergent outcomes, especially that the three rebel movements primarily sought to achieve some measure of self-determination. While it was relatively attained by the Zapatista movement through territorial autonomy, the Kurdish movement has been listed as a terrorist organization and the Polisario Front is outlawed in Morocco.

Therefore, this thesis's main aim is to answer the question of why some rebel movements attain territorial autonomy while others do not? I hypothesize that there are three factors that might affect the dynamics of the rebel movements and explain this research question. These are the extent of transnationalism and popular support of the movement, external intervention, and the level of democracy within the state. I also propose that these factors exist and interact in a particular sequence and configuration that result in divergent outcomes.

## *Acknowledgment*

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## ***Chapter I. Introduction***

### ***1.1 Introduction***

There have been a strong and multifaceted international support to the norms of “Decolonization” and “Self-determination”, and in consequence backing of the movements seeking it, since World War II (WW2). The immense favorability towards these movements and towards territorial autonomy was crystallized because they were increasingly perceived as a solution to various ethnic conflicts. This is the case especially if the ethnic conflict is among a minority population and in a defined geographical area. (Fazal, 2018) Likewise, Ted Gurr were one of the scholars who argued that negotiated territorial autonomy is shown to be an effective conflict management mechanism for various ethnopolitical wars in Western and Third World States. (Gurr, 1994) This all may have promoted the rise to some nations’ territorial autonomy and further to the development of new nation-states.

However, it does not explain the divergent outcomes of why some rebel movements were able to attain territorial autonomy while others do not and even further be listed as terrorist organizations or get internationally neglected, condemned, or resisted. Although they might develop at similar timings or may have used similar strategies as well. Despite that the debate on these rebel movements’ effectiveness to produce social or political change is still ongoing, but the focus of the thesis will be on the ability of some rebel movements to attain territorial autonomy while others do not.



Thus, I aim to answer the question of why some rebel movements attain territorial autonomy while others do not? I hypothesize that there are three factors that might affect the dynamics of the rebel movements and explain this research question. These are the extent of transnationalism and popular support of the movement, external intervention, and the level of democracy within the state. I further assume that the interaction of the three variables in a particular configuration and sequence can explain the divergent outcomes. In other words, I propose that it is crucial to go beyond the existing literature that explain the outcomes of the rebel movements through one or more variables and use an interactive model to seek an accurate causal mechanism. (will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2). This will be investigated through three case studies which are the Zapatista movement in Mexico, the Kurdish movement in Turkey and the Polisario Front in Morocco.

By analyzing the Zapatista movement in Mexico, the Kurdish movement in Turkey<sup>1</sup>, and the Polisario Front<sup>2</sup> in Morocco in a comparative perspective, the thesis aims to establish connections with the globalization literature in general, transnationalism in specific and international relations discipline to the study of the modern social movements' literature. I argue that the Zapatista movement was able to achieve territorial autonomy, while the Polisario Front and the Kurdish movement could not till today, despite the similar timings the three movements were established at. The reasons behind these different outcomes will be discussed in relation to the thesis's hypotheses

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<sup>1</sup> It is a subconscious choice to not refer to it as "PKK". This is because that the PKK is a political party and also the armed wing of the Kurdish movement in the Turkey-Kurdish conflict, as the EZLN is the armed agent of the Zapatista movement in the Zapatista-Mexican conflict, and as the SPLA , (the Saharawi People's Liberation Army) is the military wing of the Polisario Front in the Western Sahara conflict. In all, the Kurdish movement encompasses the armed agent of the PKK, the institutional political parties which are the HDP/DBP and the local assemblies. (O'Connor, 2017)

<sup>2</sup> It is the abbreviation of "The Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia al-Hamra and Rio de Oro", which is a Sahrawi independence movement based in Algeria, was founded in 1973. (Maghraoui, 2010)

outlined earlier which are the movements' transnationalism & popular support, the level of democracy within the state and the external intervention.

## ***1.2 Criteria of Case Selection***

The three rebel movements were mainly chosen as the thesis's case studies for various reasons. I argue that these cross-regional cases show multiple similarities but yielded different outcomes. In other words, - and as discussed earlier- despite the similarities, the Zapatista movement was able to attain territorial autonomy while the Kurdish movement in Turkey, particularly the PKK, got listed as a terrorist organization and the Polisario Front is now considered a frozen conflict internationally and an illegal body in the Moroccan territory. Though, these divergent outcomes will be further explained through the hypotheses outlined, I will try first to discuss the similarities that encompass the cases.

The three movements are considered peripheral movements which were established against centralized states seeking some form of self-determination. In other words, the three movements' conflicts arose as "from below" mobilization movements and against three centralized states which are Mexico, Turkey, and Morocco. The three movements aimed to achieve self-determination from three states, despite that this aim was changing back and forth in its degree and form. This means that the three rebel movements at the beginning of their eruption aimed for secession from the three states, and then this target has changed to territorial autonomy and then back to secession for some movements. Not only that, but they have also all erupted within the same era of the 1990s to confront the general context of oppression exercised against them

compared to the other groups within their societies or to defend their established pan-ethnic identities. For instance, the Zapatista movement has emerged in 1994 and primarily fought for the Mayan Peasants in Chiapas, the Kurdish movement in 1978 for the Kurdish peasants in Turkey and the Polisario Front in 1973 for the Sahrawis in Western Sahara. Not only that, but they all have used violent strategies at some point of the movement's struggle against the state and they all encompass military wings like the PKK, SPLA & EZLN, in Turkey, Morocco and Mexico, respectively. In other words. they all have exercised insurgencies and used arms against the state at least at one phase of the struggle. Moreover, they all have witnessed several peace negotiations with their states to put an end to the conflict. Also, they all were linked to places, like Diyarbakir in Turkey, Chiapas in Mexico, and Western Sahara in Morocco. Adding to this, they all at one point were categorized as national-liberation movements by various scholars. (Criss 1995, Krovel, 2013 & Daadaoui, 2010)

Despite the above similarities, and the similar timeline of the movements which were found in the 1990s, they have yielded different outcomes. For instance, the Zapatista movement was granted territorial autonomy two years after its eruption. On the other hand, the Kurdish movement and particularly the PKK was listed as a terrorist organization and the Polisario Front was categorized as a frozen conflict. Moreover, it is prominent to outline that their legal situation is different as well. For example, the Western Saharan region -the Polisario front is fighting for-is not legally part of Morocco's sovereignty like the other two cases. Also, the PKK -which I refer to as the military wing of the movement- is in fact a political party with a political wing besides being a military wing. I refer to the PKK as the military wing because it is the most active military wing of the Kurdish movement. However, these differences did not yield much different results like those between the Kurdish movement and the Polisario

Front. Thus, the choice of the cases would foster my analysis and understandings to their trajectories.

Therefore, the choice of these three rebel movements will allow for studying a wider scope of alternative accounts and elements. Not only that, but will generate patterns that transcends the regional-bounded arguments that can neither explain the cross-regional trends nor the intraregional differences. It will assist in explaining the causal mechanism of my research question and foster my study of better political, institutional, or structural explanation that can account for the divergent outcomes within the same regions and the similarities that span across three different regions. In short, these cross-regional cases might -as Jason Brownlee argued in “Authoritarianism in the age of democratization”- have dissimilarities in political-economic, historical factors and international relations, but will add to the research much richness and realism (Brownlee, 2007).

Moreover, this choice of cases will also help in testing empirically my assumptions and hypotheses which suggest going beyond the existing literature that explain the outcomes of the rebel movements through one or more variables and use an interactive model to seek an accurate causal mechanism. This is because when I referred to the literature that examined my research question, I found that none of the displayed theoretical approaches (the political opportunity structure approach and the type of the existent political system, the resource mobilization approach, and the strategies used) were able to demonstrate the divergent outcomes of these cases studies.

### ***1.3 Literature Review***

The literature displayed important aspects which I found it to have a lot of usefulness either in discussing the research question or analyzing my hypotheses. This section will be divided into three main parts. The first will focus on briefly discussing “rebel movements” & “secession”, the movements’ success and failure and the reason of using “territorial autonomy “as my measure of success, the second will display the probable reasons for different movements’ outcomes and the third will very briefly shed light on the rising significance of “territorial autonomy”.

I found huge contention not only over the definition of the movements under discussion but also over measuring the success of the movements. First, I chose to categorize the case studies as “rebel movements”. Rebel movements are the movements that seek autonomous rule to their regional governments either through territorial autonomy or secession and have engaged in an armed conflict at one or more phases in their resistance. (more of this in Chapter 2). The rebel movements under the study have sought at least at one time of their struggle self-determination and secession. This aim has changed back and forth in its degree and form, but it is crucial to highlight that territorial autonomy is different to secession. Territorial autonomy is a political status that guarantees a definite territory the authority to maintain its identity, self-rule and regulate its own affairs through autonomous legislation, executive body, or government, administration and in some cases an independent judicial unit as well,

without seceding from the nation-state (more of this in Chapter 2). However, secession is a form of political disintegration. It is when a group of political actors recall their loyalties and patriotic sentiments from the nation-state to another center of their own. Thus, the political disintegration can range between demanding different forms of autonomy like territorial autonomy to secession. (Bartkus, 1999) Meaning, that rebel movements seeking secession, usually aims to establish an independent nation-state governed by their own culture, language, or ethnicity. Secession often requires the rebel movements to seize a particular territory, which can be developed into their new territorial base. This entails that the rebel movements prioritize their constant control over their territory of dispute. (Brilmayer,1991) Likewise, James Crawford pinpoints that secession is the process of establishing a state through the usage of threat or force and usually without the political acceptance of the former nation-state. (Crawford, 2006) Other scholars tend to articulate that the absence of the nation state's consent usually leads to the usage of political violence and the escalation repressive tactics. (Pavkovic A., 2015) Thus, and according to the literature displayed above, the three rebel movements under the study at one phase of their struggle sought to secede and create their own nation-state, by which this goal has changed back and forth between secession and territorial autonomy.

Despite the literature disputes over rebel movements and other conceptual terminologies that will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2, a limited scope of the literature tried to articulate how to measure the success of the movement or when to name a rebel movement as successful and when as a failed one. For instance, Treviso mentioned that it was suggested by William Gamson that movements should be perceived as successful when they achieve the national and international recognition and were offered substantial concessions. Recognition, in general, occurs when the state

accepts to sit for the round table, negotiate, recognize, or include the movement. Therefore, a failed rebel movement is when the movement was unable to achieve any of this. Not only that, but the movement is neither considered a failure nor a success if it resulted in either ignoring or repressing. (Treviso, 2006) I think this aspect is very contentious and scholarly undertheorized. This is because I was not able to find many scholars pinpointing when to categorize a movement to have achieved “success in attaining its goals” and when not. Not only that, but several rebel movements were nationally (in terms of negotiations) and internationally recognized like the Polisario Front case, but still repressed. Therefore, for the purpose of seeking accuracy in my thesis, I propose that we need to transcend and move beyond the limited scope of definition displayed on “successful” and “failed” movements and narrow our focus to a more measurable criteria such as “territorial autonomy”. I propose that attaining some measure of autonomy specifically “territorial autonomy” will be my measure of success to the rebel movements under discussion. Yet, it is important to point out that the success for one movement might not be success for another. But, for my case studies, the similarities -displayed earlier -among them allow for such comparison and for using “territorial autonomy” as the measure of success. Territorial autonomy is again a problematic concept especially in terms of which perspective it will be measured with. Therefore, it will also be precisely discussed in Chapter 2, particularly because I would use it – as argued before- as a measure of success to the movements (like in the Zapatista case compared to the other two cases),

Further, the literature displayed different theoretical approaches to identify the possible reasons behind the variation of these movements’ outcomes. For instance, one scope argued that this can be explained through the political opportunity structure approach. It argues that the effectiveness of movements falls back to the extent of the opening or

the fragility of political systems to mobilizations. In other words, this means that the existence of open political systems, unstable relationships between parties, varying electoral results, constant conflicts with the governmental elites, and the system's desire to formulate effective policies, yield more favorable results to the movements' performance. Building on that, Tilly & Tarrow argue in their book *Contentious Politics*, that the prerequisites of social movements to effectively exist, are in the form of having a plurality of independent political centers; having an opening political structure that may allow to some extent new actors, unstable alliances, the availability of external support base of intellectuals outside the system, the existence of governmental repression or decisive changes made at the first stages of the mobilization. (Tilly & Tarrow, 2006) Similarly, McAdam, McCarthy & Zald outline that the open-strong and open-weak political structures tend to adopt assimilative strategies in dealing with social movements and their demands. And on the contrary, the closed-strong political structures are more into forcing radical attitudes over the movements and construct rigid strategies against their parties. And by open / close, they mean the ability of the governmental elites to divert political requests and by weak/strong they mean the state's ability to initiate public policies. (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1997) Moreover, there is a proposition that having a democratic political system along with the big capacity of the social movements will most probably yield favorable results for the social movements. Thus, authoritarian states along with the low-capacity social movements tend to result into oppression and may break into civil wars. (Caruso, 2015).

Other scholars related the different movements' outcomes to their effectiveness of mobilizing resources (the resource mobilization approach). The resource mobilization approach outlines that movements should be able to mobilize different resources, and by resources, it is meant money and labor. Resources are the primary element in order



to implement any action-based strategy. The essential element is the ability to calculate the rewards and losses that may result in engaging in the social movement activity. These all are immensely affected by the structure of the society and the authorities' actions. (Caruso, 2015)

In addition, other scholars tend to study the variation of movements' outcomes in terms of the strategies used. Some believe that violence or the use of coercive means is counterproductive and diminishes the ability of the movement to establish strong base of mass support or to achieve their goals. In support of this view, Tezur pinpoints that Arendt (1970) displays violence as a destructive tool and that it undermines any accomplishment of political goals. She asserts that, especially with the rise of many guerrilla movements, violence does not produce power but destroys it. (Tezur, 2015)

On the other hand, Tilly and Tarrow argue in their book *Dynamics of Contention* that there are different strategies used by the social movements which range from the non-violent and peaceful ones to the civil-disobedience and it is mainly as a consequence to the kind of relationship, the movement has with the government. And it is not necessarily that violent methods may lead to destructive results. (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2010) A large body of scholarship identifies that the existence of patterns of ethnic exclusion associated with the desire of formation new nation-states (secessionist movement) as one of the primary causes of the movement using violent strategies rather than non-violent ones. (Cederman, Wimmer, and Min, 2010 & Wasser & Griffiths, 2018) A contrary argument is put forth and asserts that non-violent resistance may be able to generate higher participation rates out of the fewer physical or moral hinders to that. In agreement with this, it is proposed that by time, the resort to violence even by secessionist movements has dwindled and that is because the movements developed the desire to be internationally recognized and join the club of

nation-states. The secessionist movements face-in general- a huge challenge of the ongoing debate between state sovereignty and self-determination norms which in turn pose a big uncertainty to them of getting legitimacy. Even though the UN charter explicitly support the self-determination norm -which is in favor of the separatist and secessionist movements- but this falls short in terms of protecting human rights' norms. Therefore, the movements tend to follow the signs sent by the international community to gain their recognition which is essential. (Mund, 2013)

Another scope of the literature focused on the norm of “territorial autonomy” and its relation to the movements. It highlighted that “territorial autonomy” and “autonomy” in general has become a central feature that characterizes the study of the modern social movements. For instance, S. Bohm et al outline that many scholars like Offe in 1987 has argued that the newly erupted social movements can be distinguished of having their focus on establishing “non-institutional” politics and autonomous structures away from the existing bureaucratic frameworks and state bodies. They argue that Scott in 1990 has also displayed that new social movements can be featured to follow the ideology of “autonomy of struggle”. This means that the movement is more willing to fight for its set of goals and will not change their demands according to the external desires. (Bohm et al, 2010)

Despite that, the literature above displayed multiple approaches to answer my research question, but I argue that the actual answer to the research question is rather complex and it is more of the interaction of variables and circumstances in a particular configuration, rather than one theorized reason as outlined above. This is because I found that none of the three main approaches discussed above was able to solely explain the divergent outcomes of my case studies. On one hand, the three rebel movements have utilized violent and non-violent strategies at least at one phase of their struggle.

Also, the Zapatista movement acquired the least resources either financially or militarily compared to the other two movements, but it was the only one that could attain territorial autonomy. Not only that, but the three states were at the democratization phase and they all suppressed the rebel movements at least at one stage of the conflict. Though, it is crucial to point out that the three states are at different levels of democratization and democracy. Thus, the thesis's main proposal is that it is not about an existing and non-existing variable to explain the causal mechanism but rather about a particular configuration and sequence of variables that interact together and unfold the different fates of the three rebel movements under discussion.

#### ***1.4 Scholarly Works on the Movements***

It was of immense importance to understand how rebel movements are studied in the literature, the features they acquire, and what are the driving forces that can change their dynamics, as discussed earlier. Now, I intend to illustrate how several scholars tackled the topic from different perspectives using the case studies under discussion. However, as far as I read, I have not found in the literature a comparison of the three rebel movements of all together, but there were several on comparing the Kurdish and the Zapatista movements.

Cakmak for instance, established a comparison between the Zapatista movement and the Kurdish movement. He does not only outline the similarities of both movements; he further assumes that the Kurdish movement will take a similar path to that of the Zapatista's. Cakmak predicts that, because -according to him- both movements are

leftists or follow in one or another the Marxist ideology even though this was not very clear in the Kurdish movement case especially at its beginning. Moreover, he adds that both movements are a consequence to a general context of oppression and exclusion undergone by the state. He also claims that both sought to alter their violent strategies. For instance, the Zapatista movement started out as an armed rebellion to grasp attention and make their objections heard to, but they tend to change this strategy later to sustain their credibility and plausibility. Similarly, the Kurdish movement has the PKK as the dominating armed agent as well in their struggle but is leaning to change its violent strategies. He asserts that both movements were able to alter the attitude of the elites towards their objections and their demands as subaltern identities. The author, further, suggests that civil societies play an important role and affect the outcomes of the movements. He argues that the support of the civil society to the Zapatista movement has contributed much to attain autonomy, and that the Kurdish movement will follow the same path. This is especially that, both movements seem to relate themselves to specific region or lands like in the case of the Zapatista movement, they relate themselves to the Chiapas and the Kurdish movement, they relate themselves to East of Turkey and now to Rojava. (Çakmak, 2014)

However, I think that, despite the immense contribution set by Cakmak, his predictions of the similar outcomes of the Kurdish movement to the Zapatista's were not met till today. The Kurdish movement resumed its armed conflict against the Turkish state and suffers from the lack of different societal national support. (More of this in Chapter four)

Serhum on the other side compared the cases through the globalization literature and the ability of movements to maintain a good image in the international arena. He compares the extent at each movement has used arms, and the duration it has used

political violence and discusses each movement's internal structure. Serhum explains that globalization creates a contested zone for the different actors who look up for resetting the rules of the game between the hegemonic and anti- hegemonic players. He differentiates between the two movements by demonstrating how the PKK of the Kurdish movement has been listed as a terrorist organization by the USA and EU, while the Zapatistas movement was able to transcend the internal support to reach out for the international community. He highlights that the dependence of political violence in the movement's struggle against the state is the primary cause of outcomes' difference between the Kurdish movement and the Zapatista. (Serhun Al, 2015)

I think that even though one of Serhum's hypothesis was close to one of my thesis's hypothesis, I argue that the use of political violence is neither a primary nor a sufficient cause, to have brought about the outcome's difference of the rebel movements. I farther contemplate to test the transnationalism of the movement in terms of the role of the new media and international networks in gaining the international legitimacy,

On the other hand, the Polisario front was mostly studied as a single case study, in the literature I have encountered. For example, Stephen Zunes, discusses the Western Saharan conflict and argues that the Polisario Front added a lot to the study of African liberation and development. Zunes claims that the Polisario Front was able to empower the Sahrawis in their national struggle and allowed for achieving multiple victories in the international community. This was mainly because of its organizational structure and political strategies by which it was able to create a dichotomy between democracy and equality. (Zunes, 1987). Others like Randa Farah examines the reasons behind the ability of the Polisario Front to resume its national struggle. It was argued that there are three main factors that fostered the Polisario Front in its struggle with the Moroccan government which are the Algeria's sponsorship of their national strategy, the

establishment of a “state in exile” and having their own informal economy, and the development of “self-determination” as their collective identity. Farther, Farah displays a similar argument of mine that despite the ability of the movement to sustain its struggle, yet it has not achieved its objectives of self-determination. Adding that, this falls mainly to the direct influences and interests of powerful states. (Farah, 2010)

However, the above literature did not give an answer of why Polisario front may have succeeded to win the international recognition but failed to attain its goals and was rather listed as a “frozen conflict.”

Therefore, I was able to conclude from the work cited above, that there are different and various arguments displayed for the rebel movements I intend to study. By which some researchers have predicted a similarity of the movements’ outcomes, others differentiated them by the use or non-use of political violence. But I argue away from this, that these rebel movements did not only yield divergent outcomes, but that these outcomes are not related to the usage of political violence. I claim that this should be studied from the international relation lens, globalization, and the political opportunity structure approach. Also, that these divergent outcomes are a result of the interaction and integration of multiple variables in a particular configuration.

### ***1.5 Research design, Methodology & Limitations***

This thesis adopts a mix of methods identified to generally belong to the “Structural Focused Comparison” approach. The Structured Focus Comparison approach utilizes the comparative mechanism and is very simple and logic as a method. It will help to

establish a systematic comparison and standardized method of collecting data for the cases under the study. This, though, does not entail that it only compares just points but as David Collier referred to as “processes unfolding over time”<sup>3</sup> However, the Structural Focused comparison approach’s main challenge is to draw out of explanations, a more complex theory. (George and Bennett, 2004)

Moreover, because I propose to find out the causal inference behind the diverging outcomes that are yielded of the rebel movements with the focus on the Zapatista movement in Mexico, the Kurdish movement in Turkey and the Polisario Front in Western Sahara, this means I will undergo a cross-regional comparison. The cross-regional comparison is still under the umbrella of the Structural-Focused comparison approach, yet it is a strategy by which I would use to compare three cases in different regions. This strategy will assist to correlate the discrete observations and interpretation of each case to fit a broader context. Conversely, it has its own challenges like the needed additional skills and collecting of the background information about the regions under examination. Not only that, but I will also face the hurdle in allocating the local conditions that feature one case than the others. However, it is prominent to highlight that this strategy will allow me to generate insights and novel analytical frameworks that may assist in solving and connecting the debates raised among various scholars who studied the topic in distinct regions. (Ahram, Köllner & Sil, 2018).

Furthermore, this research will not only compare three cases across different regions but to compare them across different time periods. Thus, I will base my thesis on variable based comparisons like those conducted by prominent scholars like Abrams

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<sup>3</sup> Collier D. (2011). Understanding Process Tracing. PS: Political Science and Politics, 44(4): 823–30

1982, Skocpol 1984, Tilly 1984 & Ragin 1987. By then, I will be able to display a strong casual inference that can transcend language barriers and cultural aspects. In other words, I will take after Jason Brownlee and his rationalization of cross-regional comparison in “Authoritarianism in the age of democratization”. He argues that comparing cross-regional cases with dissimilarities in political-economic, historical factors and international relations will enable to study a wider scope of alternative accounts and elements. He adds that cross-regional comparisons allow for generating patterns that transcends the regional-bounded arguments that can neither explain the cross-regional trends nor the intraregional differences. Thus, cross regional comparison will foster the study of better political, institutional, or structural explanation that can account for the divergent outcomes within the same regions and the similarities that span across three different regions. (Brownlee, 2007).

Therefore, at first, I will need to articulate the common stations that may exist in each case’s historical setting and pinpointing the relationships among the variables or use the “Process tracing” research method. And this as Kocher & Monteiro displayed, is very crucial to be applied before comparing the case studies. This is because process tracing will allow me to grasp the needed knowledge of history and to articulate the common stations and points of comparison. This is all very essential especially if the causal inference plays over a long span of time and entails complex and not only multi-actor but multi-level chains of study, like my case studies. (Kocher & Monteiro, 2016) Thus, process tracing will help -as outlined above- to trace the causal mechanism through precise and detailed analysis of the casual reasons behind the outcomes observed in the cases under study. It will foster the thesis’s aim especially that process-tracing is consisted of three core components which are theory-building through linking causes and outcomes, the detailed empirical analysis of the observed and collected data,



and the complementary use of other comparative methods as discussed above to reach a more accurate and testable generalizations. (Beach & Rohlfing ,2018).

On the other hand, the challenge will be to carefully trace the historical background and the important events that will be acknowledged for the first time, especially when it comes to Morocco. Not only that, but I will also need to refer to a wider literature to have better understandings of the social and cultural aspects of each case, rather than only the political aspect. Further, process tracing displays a hurdle of the need to identify a theoretical starting point which again needs intensive evidence-based work. (Collier, 2011) I think one of the other limitations I will encounter as well, is that I will not display every single detail about the case studies' historical setting, rather I would only focus on the stations of compare between them. Precisely, I will look at three particular dimensions which are transnationalism & popular support of the movement, the degree, extent and the effect of external interventions and the level of democracy within the state.

I plan to test the hypotheses that might explain the divergent outcomes, through secondary sources. The hypotheses -that I argue it might affect the dynamics of the rebel movement and explain this research question- are the extent of “transnationalism & popular support” of the movement, “external intervention”, and the “level of democracy within the state”. Therefore, these are my independent variables that would be measured using secondary sources of archival documents, governmental reports, books and other scholarly or journal papers.

In the following, the thesis will proceed first with discussing the conceptual framework and my theoretical model in the second chapter. Then it will display the historical background, the main stations of comparison and brief analysis of the three rebel

movements in the third chapter. Thereafter the thesis will test the hypotheses' relevance through in-depth analysis of the three rebel movements in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter will be the conclusion.

## ***Chapter II. Conceptual Framework***

As outlined in the previous chapter, it is of high prominence to articulate and examine several concepts thoroughly before I delve into discussing the hypotheses and the case studies. I aim through this chapter to achieve precision and clear identification of my theoretical model, various concepts, and the independent variables (hypotheses) to avoid any lack of understanding or unconscious biases when discussing and testing the causal mechanism in Chapter 4. This is especially that there is an academic conflict over several concepts I intend to use. It is important to ensure their conceptual clarification to not undermine the integrity of my hypotheses or the causal mechanism that will be investigated.

This was proven of prominence by Stathis Kalyvas when he pointed in his article “New and Old Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction” that sometimes the existent categories in literature may not be precise enough for the recent events to fit in. Also, it is crucial to integrate accurate conceptual basis and reliable empirical indicators to enable the development of a coherent generalization. He adds that this can be done through a process of careful analytical and empirical examination. (Kalyvas, 2001) Likewise, Giovanni Sartori outlines that the precise definition of concepts should not only be considered as elements of a theoretical system but rather data containers through which facts and information can be realized. He highlights the importance of the disciplined usage of terms and concepts. (Sartori, 1970). In addition to this, David Collier and

Steven Levitsky explain the fundamental care needed when defining and using concepts to avoid any dismissal of the causal arguments related to the cases under study. This is because a specific conceptual form would generate decisive components of the researcher's central arguments. (Collier & Levitsky, 1997) Thus, it is essential to achieve the clear identification of the concepts and variables before assessing the causal mechanism.

Therefore, I will focus on displaying first my theoretical model and discuss thoroughly two main concepts which are “rebel movements” and, “territorial autonomy”. Then I will outline my hypotheses or assumptions and how the literature explained their probable influence over the dynamics of the rebel movements

## ***2.1 The Model of the Thesis***

As discussed in the previous chapter and the literature review section, there are several possible reasons for the different outcomes of the rebel movements. Like, the political opportunity structure approach and the type of the existent political system, the resource mobilization approach, and the strategies used. However, I hypothesize that there are other variables that affect the outcomes of the movement. Not only that, but these variables are interacting and existing in different configurations and sequence to yield divergent outcomes.

I found Ted Gurr's model of “ethnopolitical rebellion” is close to my assumed theoretical model, but I intend to move beyond it. Ted Gurr combines the three competing approaches discussed in the literature, the resource mobilization approach,

the relative deprivation and the political opportunity structure to the group identity and cohesion approach to explain the prospects of the rebellious ethnic conflict. (Saxton, 2005) On the contrary, my theoretical model is an interactive model between three hypotheses that aims to develop a causal mechanism for the different outcomes of the rebel movements. I propose that my interactive model displays the fact that the three hypotheses may not solely have a direct impact on yielding such outcomes, but that the rebel movements are influenced by them all. In other words, my model suggests that it is not about an existing or non-existing variable, but rather a configuration of three variables that exist in a particular sequence. I claim that the rebel movements' outcomes are influenced by three variables, transnationalism and popular support, external intervention, and the level of democracy within the state. Accordingly, I hypothesize that these three variables are existing in a particular configuration and sequence in each rebel movement under discussion, that resulted in such different outcomes. I assume that the level of democracy within the state determines the state reaction to the rebel movement eruption and to its transnational networks and popular support. While the external intervention influences the dynamics of the conflict and the existent balance of power resulted from transnationalism and popular support.

Therefore, this model transcends the theoretical approaches displayed in the literature review section in Chapter 1. This is because and as mentioned earlier, I found that none of the three main approaches discussed (the political opportunity structure approach and the type of the existent political system, the resource mobilization approach, and the strategies used) was enough in itself to explain the divergent outcomes of my case studies. On one hand, the three rebel movements have utilized violent and non-violent strategies at least at one phase of their struggle. Also, the Zapatista movement acquired the least resources either financially or militarily compared to the other two movements

but was the only one that could attain territorial autonomy (not as suggested by the resource mobilization approach). Not only that, but the three states were at the democratization phase and they all suppressed the rebel movements at least at one stage of the conflict. Thus, the model assures that it is not about an existing and non-existing variable to explain the causal mechanism as proposed in the literature but rather is to a particular configuration and sequence of variables that interact together and unfold the different fates of the three rebel movements under discussion.

After discussing the model, it is important to clearly identify “rebel movements” and “territorial autonomy”.

## ***2.2 Rebel Movements***

I found a significant contention in the literature over conceptualizing movements like those I intend to study. I will try to display this contention first and then pinpoint the reasons of finding “rebel movements” a precise concept for my case studies.

Firstly, a group of scholars tends to resemble any movement that is representative to the people who are not identified with the established formal institutions and thereby seek socioeconomic or political change, as a “social movement”. (Lang, 2005) Similarly, De La Porta & Diani argue that social movements must construct contesting relations by which their opponents are pinpointed. Not only that, but they are also consisted of informal networks and usually are possessing a distinct and clear identity. (De la Porta & Diani, 2006) Therefore, it is claimed that social movements are more of organized - yet informal - social entities which are involved in extra-institutional

conflict to achieve certain set of goals. These goals can be in a form of changing an already-established policy, introducing new policies, or imposing a radical cultural and political change. Christian Welzel, explains that not only grievances or relative deprivation led to the formulation of social movements, but they can be based on shared values. This means that the existing belief that the individual or a group are underrepresented and not getting their share of rights equally to other societal groups - which can be related to identities like ethnicities, race, or gender - can lead to the formation of social movements (Welzel, 2012).

From another perspective, Goodwin displays a more detailed conceptualizations to the movements. For instance, he defines movements that claim control or authority over the state or some segment of the state as “revolutionary social movements” or “revolutionary movements”. (Goodwin, 2001). This was found of relevance to Tilly’s definition of revolutions. However, other scholars like Oiknomakis argue that Goodwin’s conceptualization is a bit confusing, especially that not all the movements that seek to control over the state or part of it is characterized by revolutionary aspects neither in terms of changing the existing state through revolutionary means, nor in terms of implementing revolutionary or radical social transformations within the given territory. Some other scholars tend to conceptualize the revolutionary movements that acquire revolutionary characteristics (and not the emancipatory one) as insurgents. Thus, the revolutionary movements may not necessarily turn into insurgency, but will if they chose to seize the state power using violent strategies. (Oiknomakis, 2019).

Moreover, the literature also discusses that there are other conceptualizations to movements like secessionist, separatist and autonomous movements. Secessionist movements are on one hand, assemble the fact that they are not revolutions and do not only seek to overthrow the existing government, instead, they tend to establish an

independent nation-state. Therefore, a successful secessionist movement is a movement by which its main goal is to eject itself from a larger nation and establish a new government within a nationally or internationally recognizable territory. This in turn differs from the separatist movements which only seek regional autonomy. In other words, the separatist movements do not demand ejecting themselves from larger nations but rather to have some sort of political, cultural, and economic autonomy. This demanded regional autonomy is relative and its extent is varied according to the agreement set between the movement and the parent nation. (Stein, 2016) Other scholars tend to identify that these movements are different from the “autonomous movements”. Cristina Fominaya, for instance, depicts that autonomous movements are broadly defined as horizontally organized networks by which values like self - organization, participatory democracy, autonomy, and direct action are the primacy. These movements usually reject any form of representative democracy or rule of majority and favors the non-hierarchical ruling models that are based on self-governance and assembly form of decision making. Not only that, but autonomous movements’ ideology is also heterogeneous and there is no one ideology to define the movements nor to be officially announced. (Fimonaya, 2009)

This has made the categorization of the cases under the study not an easy task, which I argue that they are better to be conceptualized as “rebel movements”, a smaller category of “social movements” and lies between it and “insurgencies”. This is because the case studies under discussion, have changed their goals and strategies back and forth at different time intervals between creating an independent nation-state to achieving regional autonomy. This made it inaccurate to conceptualize and categorize them in any of the above categories. In other words, rebel movements are more of a category that encompasses most of the above categorizations but with higher accuracy and distinct

features. For instance, if rebel movements had its main target to achieve independence from a foreign rule, by then it might be a national liberation rebel movement. It can also seek political change and political power, by then it might be an insurgent rebel movement. Similarly, movements that aim to separate themselves from an already existent nation-state, are called secessionist rebel movement or a separatist rebel movement if they only seek a regional autonomy.

Because, as mentioned above, I found it rather precise and comprehensive to use “rebel movements” for my cases, I will take after Wafula Okumu and Augustine Ikelegbe and their definition of rebel movements. They argue that rebel movements are more of organizations which engage or have engaged at one phase in an armed opposition and resistance against mainly governments and ruling states. They claim that the rebel movements’ main target is to seek “change” either in terms of replacing or displacing the existent governments, reframing of the existent structures and political frameworks, degrading of authority, and achieving autonomous rule to their regional governments, or redrawing of national boundaries to establish separate nation-states. (Okumu & Ikelegbe, 2010).

In all, I define rebel movements as the movements that seek autonomous rule to their regional governments either through territorial autonomy or secession and have engaged in an armed conflict at one or more phases in their resistance. This is because, I think that the earlier categorizations discussed in the literature above, are either too narrow or too broad for the cases, especially that the movements under the study have used violent strategies at one point and did not have one specific strategy or aim throughout the years of their resistance. Some movements like the Kurdish movement have been back and forth in terms of using violent strategies through their military wing (PKK), while the Zapatista movement has only used violence for days. Though, both



movements have used their military wings at one or several points of their resistance. Similarly, the three movements' initial goal was "national liberation" which has later changed for some movements to "territorial autonomy" and back to "national liberation" for other movements. Hence, the three movements under the study have sought at least at one time of their struggle to achieve self-determination and secession. Therefore, I found that categorizing the case studies as "rebel movements" will be more accurate when discussing either the hypotheses or the case studies.

### ***2.3 Territorial autonomy***

Territorial autonomy is -as outlined before- my measure of success to the rebel movements under discussion. Therefore, I aim to precisely discuss the concept and the literature debate over it.

Autonomy and territorial autonomy in specific as concepts are considered very crucial either in social movements' literature or for the newly erupted rebel movements. This is because the recent movements tend to engage in conflicts of self-determination and self-rule or governance in different schemes socially, economically, or politically. These conflicts are widely spread in Latin America where the most famous ones discussed in the literature are the "the Caracoles and the Good Government Councils" governed by the Zapatista movement, "the Federation of Neighbourhood Councils in El Alto, Bolivia" and the settlements ruled by the Movement of Landless Rural Workers in Brazil. The rebel movements seeking autonomy are existent in other parts of the world as well, like in Europe for instance. The "Disobedienti" in Italy, "Autonomen" in Germany, the "Movement of the Unemployed" in France are all examples of

European autonomous movements. In Asia, autonomy has also dominated many peasant movements like the vibrant contention against the genetically modified crops in India. In Africa, autonomy was foreseen to be the only solution to the various ethnic deadly conflicts either horizontally or vertically with the colonial powers. (Bohm et al., 2010)

Thus, despite that autonomy has been a rising feature of the recent social movements and it has been called for in different regions, it is also considered as the vehicle to secure minority rights. In other words, autonomy along history as outlined above has been existent and exercised in different forms and varying degrees. This was officially highlighted through Article 1 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities that entails the responsibility of the states to protect the identity and rights of the existent minority groups. This may get addressed through legislative and other measures to secure the situation of minority groups. Therefore, autonomy is considered a political and a non-violent practice to settle the existent struggles between states and ethnic minorities. This can be practically feasible through constitutional accords and peace treaties. (Wheatley, 2005) Thus, autonomy can range between power-sharing arrangements to regional or territorial autonomy. Many states found that a degree of autonomy will allow for more stability and better statehood performance. However, based on literature, this degree varies according to the political and economic powers of the autonomous party and the democratic maturity of the state. (Ghai, 2000) Because autonomy is driven from two Greek words: “auto” and “nomos” which means self and rule or law, respectively, political autonomy allows to a varying degree the construction of distinct laws. For instance, it can guarantee the right of the individual to decide independently in certain issues, to exercising exclusive powers to certain state bodies like the legislation,

executive and adjudication. However, my lens of focus will be on one form of the “political autonomy”, particularly the “territorial autonomy” which will be highlighted upon in the coming paragraphs. Therefore, political autonomy in general allows for “self-rule” specifically in the field of minority rights and range from self-administration, to complete self-rule which is one step earlier than complete independence or secession from the nation-state. (Cornell, 2002)

I intend to define territorial autonomy as a form of autonomy that authorizes a particular territory to self-rule but without constituting an independent nation state. This entails that the power authority of the central government is not enforced over the autonomous entity. This means that the autonomous entities do not have an official representation in the national parliament, and that they usually develop their executive bodies separately from the national ones as well, which get elected by the regional assembly. (Suso, 2010) Thus, territorial autonomy is more of a specific status where a definite territory is granted self-rule and the authority to regulate its own affairs through autonomous legislation, executive body, or government, administration and in some cases an independent judicial unit as well. The territorial autonomous entity should be able to exercise these authorities over the population within only their territorial area. Moreover, as much as territorial autonomy does not mean complete secession off the central state, but it is a mechanism by which the national minority is able to maintain its identity and to regulate its affairs solely from the central state. Thus, they are not authorized to demand sovereignty away from the central state, but they could display and use their own national symbols, establish their own means of communication and media, set their own educational programs, and foster their values and beliefs. (Benedikter, 2009)

After discussing “territorial autonomy” as a concept, it is important to differentiate it from “Federalism”. Federalism is one of the concepts that are used to be closely linked to autonomy, despite the major differences. Federalism -for example- still allows for the central state to exercise power over the federal entities or regions. These federal entities participate in the process of policymaking, but still the highest powers are in the hands of the central state over them and they may self-rule only in certain aspects. This means that federalism creates a multi-level government that is based on shared rule between the federal or central government and the regional government(s). It establishes a single political system by which the regional government is inferior to the central government. Therefore, the authoritative power is divided between the two level of governments within the political system. (LLuch, 2011) Furthermore, federalism- according to William Riker- is defined as a political organization that permits the division of the government’s operations between itself as the central government and the regional government(s), in a way that allows both the governments to exercise its authoritative powers over particular issues. (Volden, 2004) The territorial autonomous regions may also have the right to self-rule and usually in need to set arrangements with the national institutions of the central power of the national state. This is to institutionalize the degree of autonomy through the constitutional structure of the state. Though, as previously discussed, the territorial autonomous entities (regions, province, or district) are expected to democratically set their own parliaments or assemblies. This means that the autonomous entities usually do not have an official representation in the national parliament, and that the executive and the legislative bodies of the autonomous entities are structured separately from the national ones. This entails that there is no official authority exerted by the central government over the institutional bodies of the

autonomous entities. By then, this also means that there are no transferred responsibilities from the central government to the autonomous entities. (Barter, 2018)

In short, territorial autonomy is different from federalism. It allows a particular territory not to be politically linked to sovereign state other than geographically being a part of the nation-state. Also, it does not permit division or shared powers between multi-level governments, but rather establishing a political system for the territorial autonomous entity parallel to the national one. This is because territorial autonomy requires that the autonomous region to have both administrative powers of local entities, a regional parliament to set legislative laws in basic domains, an independent elected executive body authorized to implement the legislation of the autonomous region.

Therefore, territorial autonomy is a political status that guarantees a definite territory the authority to maintain its identity, self-rule and regulate its own affairs through autonomous legislation, executive body, or government, administration and in some cases an independent judicial unit as well, without seceding from the nation-state. However, it is not a multi-level government within the political system like federalism, rather it allows for establishing two parallel political systems.

The following paragraphs will be divided into three sections to identify thoroughly the three hypotheses and outline how the literature explained their probable influence over the dynamics of the rebel movements.

## ***2.4 Transnationalism & Popular Support***

It is theorized that rebel movements or armed groups in general may need or seek to establish a degree of popular support either internally or externally. This in turn should assist them to achieve some or all their goals. This relationship between establishing transnational networks, winning popular support and the relative success of rebel movements is very fundamental because this base of support assists the movement in their mobilizations and to construct their repertoire of contention against their conflicting parties. Likewise, scholars like Goodwin, O'Leary & Silke discuss that the persistency of the armed groups or rebel movements depends on their ability to maintain a considerable base of popular support. For instance, they claim that the Marxist movement's efficiency to liberate the Kurdistan's from imperialism and its evolution into an autonomous movement for only Kurdish Turks and then to a post-nationalist social liberation movement for Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi and Syrian Kurds, mainly falls back to its popular base of support. It did not only maintain its struggle but has crosscut several state borders. (O'Connor, 2017)

Thus, on one hand, transnationalism usually refers to different kinds of global or cross-border networks and connections, that allows the rebel movement to increase its outreach to the global civil society. It is a base of established networks that enhance communication on different schemes either through exchange of resources, information, or farther to support and engagement of socio-cultural and political activities. Literature used to link transnationalism to identity or dispersed ethnic groups. Despite that this is not necessarily be true, but it is because that most of the transnational networks are based between groups who share a common identity or share similar cultural, linguistic, or ethnic ties. Transnational networks proliferated with the contemporary developments in global communications, like media channels or satellite TV broadcasting, emails, social media and internet usage, transportation, and cross-

border activities. It has also increased with the rising numbers of NGOs and the attendees of the international conferences by different rebel movements on issues like human rights. Thus, getting such popular support and being a transnational rebel movement is not considered much of an impossible task. However, this does not mean that all the movements which seek such transnationalism and popular support were able to attain it. This is because the linkage to global and the national civil society entails establishing various forms of networks with national and global organizations. (Vertovec, 2001) So, while transnationalism starts first by constructing various social spaces because of various transnational interactions and activities across the borders. The national popular support starts with establishing political networks with various societal groups and national organizations. These networks usually result in changes to the existent power relations because they allow the involvement of more actors and agents.

It is also important to indicate that I found large literature supporting my hypothesis that transnationalism and popular support increases the probability of the rebel movements to achieve relatively their goals. Like, Keck and Sikkink argue that transnational networks and popular support assist in establishing new channels by which such rebel movements can voice their concerns, or the discriminatory actions exercised against them in the inter-state system. This will in turn help in engaging supportive NGOs, establishing new networks by which may increase the political pressure over the conflicting party or the state. Even farther, this all may lead to the “Boomerang model” which occurs when the local level was able to seek and maintain international support against conflicting states. In other words, the boomerang effect is activated when the local-level movements can establish networks with different bodies, or actors across national boundaries and get their support. (Keck & Sikkink, 1998)

Likewise, Lipsky discusses how transnationalism and popular support can affect the rebel movements' activities and results. He explains that the existence of popular support within the conflict, alters the existent balance of power between the two conflicting parties. (In our case, the rebel movement, and the state). Thus, the establishment of transnational and political networks are essential for the persistency of the contentious politics of the rebel movements. Moreover, movements that are able to link its cause to those of the transnational and various networks or able to match their concerns and goals with the probable international proponents, have higher chance to not only gain their support, market widely to themselves but also to attain their goals. In other words, movements which succeed in grasping the attention of transnational actors will be able to shed light upon the movements' concerns and goals either through lobbying such actors directly or through the media and journalists reporting about them, which largely assist in the movement's effectiveness. (Bob, 2006)

One problem the rebel movements might face, is that their goals or causes -which are usually localized and rigid- fall short to meet or match the international supporters' agendas and by then fail to gain enough upholding. This entails that such movements may seek to reframe their causes or the used tactics to grasp the international attention and win their support. That is why many scholars tend to discuss the favorability of many of the recent movements to pursue mass mobilizations or civil disobedience techniques that can easily get international backings. Furthermore, international supporters tend to look over other variables as well like weighing the costs of risking their names and reputations. Thus, they seek to primarily ensure the legitimacy of the movement and the authenticity of their goals, demands and allegations. Not only that, but the transnational actors or supporters may also evaluate the extent of benefits they may receive supporting such movements to serve their broader targets. (ibid, 2006)



Thus, the rebel movements through transnationalism and popular support would be able to better confront the state's power and even further amend the existent balance of power. However, despite it is not my focal point but it is pivotal to highlight that there are other rebel movements which do not adopt transnationalism and rather concentrate on the local mobilization. They use different techniques to face the state repression like placing themselves in remote rural regions, mountains or among the urban underground, etc. (Salehyan, 2011)

Therefore, I can conclude that I found a wide array of literature that support my first hypothesis. Transnationalism and popular support open new doors of developing a social space of interaction that can transcend the official boundaries of the states and influence the dynamics of the conflict in favor of the movement. This is because through these networks, the rebel movements can succeed in grasping the attention of various actors and shed light upon the movements' concerns and goals either through lobbying such actors directly or through the media and journalists reporting about them. This largely impose a political pressure over the state and enhance the movements' effectiveness of attaining their goals. Not only that, but transnationalism and popular support also affect the ability of the state control to monitor and dominate the actions of the transnational rebel movements or to control or limit the external political pressure exerted over it. These networks allowed the interaction to happen not only among institutions but among local people or groups in two or more different countries. These transnational interactions can vary from international conferences, international calls, and emails, to satellite TV broadcasting, to social media and internet usage, to constructing official-based agreements and negotiations among various institutions and groups. So, -as mentioned earlier- while transnationalism starts first by constructing various social spaces because of various transnational interactions and activities across

the borders. The national popular support starts with establishing political networks with various societal groups and national organizations. These networks usually result in changes to the existent power relations because they allow the involvement of more actors and agents.

In all, rebel movements may get close to achieve their goals, if they were able to establish a strong base of transnational networks and supporters. Not only that, but these should be accompanied by coherent marketing of the cause and the good presentation of the movement to win the support of the international audience. In short, transnationalism and popular support allow the rebel movement to increase its outreach to the global and national civil society.

## ***2.5 Level of Democracy within the state***

The level of democracy and the implementation of the democratic values are one of the thesis's hypotheses as well. I argued that this variable contributes to the causal mechanisms that resulted in the divergent outcomes of the three rebel movements under study. I do not intend to thoroughly discuss the literature debates on "democracy" as a concept. Rather, I would focus on the key principles of democracy and its influence over the dynamics of the rebel movements.

First, democracy usually as a concept entails a direct or indirect structure of a government that is ruled by the people, and not a single ruler, or a military force. Thus, government forms of monarchy, theocracy, oligarchy, or dictatorships are nixed to democracy. Democracy should also preserve the key rights of freedom and equality which usually are attained constitutionally. Without discussing in details the principles

of democracy, I will display its several core features. Democracy pursues the practice of basic human rights and civil liberties equally to all the societal groups within a state. It also ensures the pursuit of free and fair elections to guarantee the existence of open and competitive political arena. It reinforces the equal participation and representation in the government to all the factions of the society. It assures the separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judiciary authorities and by turn promote the checks and balances. It is also entailed to guarantee the protection of personal, economic, political, and social rights to the citizens constitutionally. Finally, it should allow for the freedom of the press and media. (Garada ,2018)

The relationship between different types of the states and the rebel movements is found to be fundamental. This is because the type of the existent state influences the state's reaction to the rebel movement. For instance, it was theorized by Charles Tilly, that the undemocratic states are more prone to encounter civil wars and continuous armed conflicts with the rebel movements compared to the democratic states. This is because the democratic states apply more tolerant mechanisms towards the rebel movements and to their demands. He further categorizes the democratic and undemocratic states into four major categories, like the high-capacity undemocratic, low-capacity undemocratic, high-capacity democratic and low-capacity democratic. He assumes that the high and low-capacity undemocratic states usually depend on the security forces to restrict the activities of the rebel movements. The low-capacity democratic state relies to a limited extent on violence in public politics, unlike the high-capacity democratic states that effectively monitor and constrict the existence of political violence. (Hui, 2007)

Similarly, Doug Mc Adam and Sidney Tarrow articulate that liberal democratic states tend to allow for contentious politics because it is usually contained within their

political institutions and structures like the electoral and legislative bodies. Moreover, the liberal-democratic states may use repressive strategies but are very limited in its scope and degree if the contentious politics may bring drastic changes. On the contrary, the authoritarian states tend to be less willing to allow for the contentious politics. It usually resorts to using violent strategies to halt such political actions that can put the political system at the stake. This is especially that any form of contention is perceived by the authoritarian states as a form of danger to the stability of the state. (McAdam & Tarrow, 2019)

In addition, and as previously explained in the first chapter, the political opportunity structure approach in the literature fosters what is explained above. It argues that the effectiveness of movements falls back to the extent of the opening or the fragility of political systems to mobilizations. In other words, this means that the existence of open political systems, unstable relationships between parties, varying electoral results, and the system's desire to formulate effective policies, yield more favorable results to the movements' performance. Similarly, McAdam, McCarthy & Zald outline that the open-strong and open-weak political structures tend to adopt tolerant strategies in dealing with social movements and their demands. And on the contrary, the closed-strong political structures are more into forcing radical attitudes over the movements and construct rigid strategies against their parties. And by open / close, they mean the ability of the governmental elites to divert political requests and by weak/strong they mean the state's ability to initiate public policies. (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1997) Moreover, there is a proposition that having a democratic political system along with the big capacity of the social movements will most probably yield favorable results for the social movements. Thus, authoritarian states along with the low-capacity social movements tend to result into oppression and may break into civil wars. (Caruso, 2015).

In all, the literature has endorsed my second hypothesis as well. It showed that the type of the state affects immensely the dynamics of the rebel movements. This is because democratic states tend to adopt tolerant measures to deal with the rebel movements and their demands or contentious politics. Unlike the authoritarian states that tend to use violent and coercive methods. In other words, the effectiveness of the rebel movements is high in the democratic states and usually yield the intended outcomes, unlike the authoritarian states. However, it is crucial to articulate that there are different levels of each state type like democracy which can range from the transition phase of democratization and procedural democracy to participatory democracy.

## ***2.6 External Intervention***

External intervention is the last variable that I think it might have affected the outcomes of the three rebel movements under the study. But before tackling it and test its relevance to be considered one of the causal mechanisms that yielded such divergent outcomes between the three rebel movements in Chapter 4, it is important to outline its conceptual meaning and the discussed probable influence in the literature.

External intervention in fact has so many types and effects. There is no agreed definition in all the academics to this concept; however, it is possible to display its core features. External intervention in general and according to Ted Robert Gurr in his paper of “Third party intervention in Ethnic conflicts”, may take the form of either giving assistance, withdrawing it or to changing the status and the kind of relationships exist between two or more actors. It also may result in changing the prospects of the ongoing conflict. The

external intervention even may use different strategies. Military action is not the sole tool used as a strategy, but there are other tools like the economic sanctions or financial assistance for instance. Accordingly, external intervention may use both tools as a mixed strategy combining the economic punishment along the military interference. Besides the different set of strategies, the external intervention might use, it can also take various forms. For example, it can be a unilateral intervention usually by major state powers, or a multilateral intervention by a group of countries, or an international organization such as the UN. Moreover, external intervention can also be either neutral with the aim to get the conflicting parties at the table of negotiations and display possible settlements or biased to one of the conflicting parties. (Khosla, 2004)

The literature focuses on a certain assumption, that the external intervention, whenever it happens, it is to resolve the ongoing conflict, and to ensure the regional or even the international stability. This can be through halting the escalation of the use of violence either by launching cease-fire approaches or by assisting in defeating the opposing group. (Bobrow & Boyer, 1997) However, the debatable issue here is that such assumption had merely ignored the different interests and the motivations behind the intervention decision. Despite that discussing these motivations and interests are out of the scope of interest of the thesis, it is important to highlight that some intervention may further destabilize the internal situation.

Besides, it is prominent to also point out that large scope of literature argued that external intervention usually leads to changes in the balance of power which is prominent for success or failure of the conflicting parties. It explained that the external intervention might result in negative outcomes to the rebels if it was a unilateral intervention in favor of the government or the host state, and with the intervening actor being a major power (that falls back to its vast number of supplied resources). This was

based on the assumption that the unilateral intervention is biased to a certain side and in turn yields an imbalance of power between the conflicting parties in favor of the state, whereas the multilateral intervention is usually neutral and seeking maintenance of an agreed balance of power. (Reagan ,1996) Even though, I might agree to some of the assumptions outlined above, I oppose that multilateral intervention is usually neutral which was not the case in the Western Sahara conflict.

I though found Regan's arguments close to the assumption I made. He argues that the early external intervention in support of the state might yield positive results to the state against the rebels. This is because the external intervention will reinforce the already-mighty military force (in most of the cases) and the power supremacy of the state. On the contrary, early external intervention supporting the rebel movement would prolong the conflict. This is because the rebel movement may strengthen their situation to balance their power to the state's but not necessarily result in decisive victory. (Regan, 2002) In addition to this, Elbadawi and Sambanis explain that the early external intervention in favor to the rebel movements especially if they are at weaker position compared to the state, will also prolong the conflict. (Elbadawi & Smabanis, 2002)

Therefore, the above literature supports my hypothesis that the external intervention and particularly the early external intervention in favor of either the rebel movement or the state, may lead either to decisive victory to the state or to prolonging of the armed conflict. This is still considered a failure because the rebel movement may not wither away but could not attain its targeted goal or my measure of success, which is for my cases, the territorial autonomy.

After outlining the three hypotheses and how the literature explained their probable influence over the dynamics of the rebel movements, I intend to move beyond this using

my interactive model. I claim that, the three hypotheses may not solely have a direct impact for yielding the divergent outcomes, but that the rebel movements are influenced by them all. In other words, it is not about an existing or non-existing variable, but rather a configuration of three variables that exist in a particular sequence that yielded such divergent outcomes in the cases under discussion. This will be further examined of its relevance in Chapter four.

## ***2.7 Conclusion***

In conclusion, this chapter aimed to achieve precision and clear identification of my theoretical interactive model, different concepts like rebel movements and territorial autonomy, and the independent variables (hypotheses) to avoid lack of understanding or any unconscious biases when discussing and testing the causal mechanism in Chapter 4. I proposed that the thesis's interactive model will reinforce the assumption that the three variables may not solely have a direct impact for yielding the outcomes, but that the rebel movements are influenced by them all. In other words, my model suggested that it is not about an existing or non-existing variable, but rather a configuration of three variables that exist in a particular sequence that yielded such divergent outcomes in the cases under discussion.

Moreover, this chapter displayed how the literature explained the probable influence of the three variables (transnationalism & popular support, level of democracy within the state and external intervention) over the dynamics of the rebel movements. It articulated that transnationalism and popular support allowed for an immense external



political pressure to be exerted over the state from the global and national civil society, which assist the rebel movement to achieve its goals. Furthermore, the type of the state and the level of democracy also affect the prospects of the rebel movements because democratic states tend to use more tolerant strategies towards the movements and their demands, unlike the authoritarian states. Last but not least, external intervention seems to yield unfavorable results if it was an early unilateral intervention in support of the state or any early intervention in favor of the rebel movement. This is because these interventions either result in the decisive victory of the state or in prolonging of the conflict. Both results are considered a failure to the rebel movements because my measure of success is attaining territorial autonomy.

However, I further claim that and according to my interactive model, what is displayed in the literature is rather rigid, and narrow-scoped. And I propose that the causal mechanism to the divergent rebel movements' outcomes should be examined through the interaction of the three variables all together and through pinpointing their sequence and configuration. Therefore, this interactive model transcends the theoretical approaches displayed in the literature review section in Chapter 1. This is because, I found that neither of the three main approaches discussed (the political opportunity structure approach and the type of the existent political system, the resource mobilization approach, and the strategies used) was enough to explain the divergent outcomes of my case studies. This all will be explored thoroughly in Chapter 4, but before doing this, the historical background of the three rebel movements and a brief analysis will first be discussed in Chapter 3.

### ***Chapter III. Historical Background***

As explained in Chapter 1 & 2, I aim through this thesis to outline the causal mechanism that can explain my research question through an interactive model. This model suggests that the three independent variables of transnationalism and popular support, level of democracy within the state and external intervention interacts in various configurations and sequences to yield the different outcomes for the three rebel movements under discussion. Not only that, but that the causal mechanism to explain the reasons of attaining territorial autonomy or not is not based on the existence of a variable or not, rather on the interaction of the three variables together. However, in order to examine this causal mechanism, I will use “process tracing” -as elaborated on in Chapter 1-to identify the common stations that may exist in each case’s historical setting and pinpoint the configuration of the three variables for each rebel movement. In other words, I attempt to show through unfolding the main historical events, the change of causation that might have led to divergent outcomes.

Thus, in Chapter 3 I aim to display the crucial historical events in each rebel movement to articulate the common stations and points of comparison. I also seek to present evidence on the three movements from the existing secondary literature that I will further use in my in-depth analysis in Chapter 4 for comparison. In order to do this, I will use Process tracing because -as elaborated on in Chapter 1- it is essential especially

because the causal inference plays over a long span of time and entails complex and not only multi-actor but multi-level chains of study, like my case studies. (Kocher & Monteiro, 2016)

Thus, process tracing will help to trace the causal mechanism through precise and detailed analysis of history and the reasons behind the outcomes observed in the cases under study. It will foster the thesis's aim especially that process-tracing is consisted of three core components which are theory-building through linking causes and outcomes, the detailed empirical analysis through the displayed historical data, and the complementary use of other comparative methods to reach a more accurate and testable generalizations. (Beach & Rohlfing ,2018).

In all, this chapter will display the pivotal historical events that the three rebel movements under study have encountered. This will help in explaining the causal mechanism through unfolding the main historical events, the change of causation that might have led to divergent outcomes and through presenting evidence on the three movements from the existing secondary literature. This all-in turn will assist in my in-depth analysis in Chapter 4. Thus, this chapter will be divided into three sections. Each section will discuss one of the rebel movements and will display a brief analysis over it.

### ***3.1 The Zapatista Movement***

First, the Zapatista movement developed roughly in 1994 in Chiapas, Mexico. It was primarily created as a resistance to the new neoliberal policies enforced over the

population there. But before delving into the dynamics of the conflict between the Zapatista movement and the Mexican state, it is crucial to outline the political and social environment of the Mexican state at the time and the marginalization faced by the population in Chiapas.

The Mexican state encompassed the largest indigenous population in Latin America, which is around 15% of the whole population in Mexico. According to the UN Human Rights Commission, Chiapas is not the only indigenous population in Mexico, and there are approximately 12.7 million indigenous people who speak 62 different languages. Though, Chiapas is featured to be the most multicultural and multi-ethnic population of the Mexican states and the Federal District. It acquires around 1.1 million indigenous people. Not only that, but Chiapas is also considered one of the richest Mexican states in its natural resources and occupies 30% of Mexico's fresh water supply. However, despite all this, Chiapas was ranked to be the second most marginalized Mexican state within Mexico. Furthermore, the indigenous populations within Chiapas suffer from very low income, are roughly below the poverty line, and 70% of them are suffering from malnutrition. Chiapas was not only marginalized socially and economically as explained above, but politically as well. This was evidentially vivid throughout the Mexican history, by which the indigenous population in Chiapas were constantly blocked from any kind of participation in the governmental decision-making processes and from receiving any sort of human rights or services like education and healthcare. (Godelmann, 2014)

However, the hostile situation between Mexico and the Zapatista movement got rather complicated when the Mexican government resumed its repressive activities and implemented the NAFTA (North American Free Trade) agreement. This is especially that the NAFTA agreement has further worsened the low living standards of the

indigenous population, especially in Chiapas. This treaty led to the increase of the competition between the local products of the indigenous populations and the international ones. In consequence, the populations were threatened that their products cannot stand such competition and will get wiped out off the local markets. In other words, these neoliberal-policies were enforced to outweigh Mexico's debt crisis but they negatively affected the living standards of the poor peasants and the indigenous communities like that in Chiapas. Not only that, but the Mexican government has enforced earlier to NAFTA, the agrarian counter-reform in 1991 which altered the policies set for land redistribution. This reform allowed for privatization of the collectively owned lands. Thus, such reforms were considered as a "governmental betrayal" especially after allowing and prioritizing the US and the Canadian large corporates to rent and utilize the indigenous populations' lands. And they resulted in the development of the Zapatista movement to defend the rights and pretentiousness of the Chiapas population. However, it is still prominent to outline that away from the negative economic outcomes the NAFTA agreement brought to the indigenous populations in Chiapas, it has also advocated the implementation of political reforms that protect the human rights and democratic values. These political reforms had affected the Mexican state's reaction towards the Zapatista movement and its transnational networks later on. (more of this in Chapter 4) (Collins, 2010)

Later, the Zapatista movement established its military wing of EZLN and explicitly called for putting an end to the Mexican repression and the indigenous segregation. Though, the Zapatista movement may have officially got well known in 1994, but it secretly started organizing its rebels at least a decade before that. This was because it sought to proceed with what their antecedents started with in 1970s. But the triggering factor that pushed the Zapatista movement to launch their armed rebellion was the

neoliberal policies or NAFTA implementation in Mexico in 1982. (Scholk, 2007) Thus, the political, social, and economic marginalization practiced against the indigenous populations in Chiapas resulted in the development of the Zapatista movement and their resistance.

The movement's resistance started as a rebellion and continued as an ongoing process of constructing new social practices and spaces to combat the domination of the existing state. The Zapatista movement's military wing EZLN, which is also called the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, was in command at the beginning of the rebellion and initiated an armed uprising against the Mexican government. Further, it explicitly announced its resistance to the implementation of NAFTA agreement. This armed uprising was politically foreseen at start as a guerrilla group targeting the rule of power; however, this was proven wrong. The Zapatista movement's armed rebellion has lasted only for twelve days, and then shifted its resistance to a form of civil disobedience for another fifteen days. Throughout these fifteen days, the Zapatista movement focused and succeeded to establish autonomous structures of governmental bodies and society in the territories of Chiapas. Not only that, but it was also able to construct a coherent base of networks internally and transnationally. This in turn grasped a lot of global attention and awareness to the status of the indigenous population in Chiapas, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs. Therefore, it is important to highlight that the armed conflict between the Zapatista movement and the Mexican government lasted for only 12 days, which was followed by set of negotiations, cease-fire procedures and civil-disobedience practices. (Scholk, 2010)

The Mexican's state reaction to the Zapatista movement and the resistance was violent at the early days of the resistance, which has changed later. The Mexican government faced the Zapatista movement initially with the security and military forces. But the forces were not able to completely combat the armed rebellion especially with the vast protests, and the engagement of wide sector of the civil and global society. Moreover, The EZLN was able to take control of four towns in Chiapas, and also of San Cristobal de las Casas (the tourist town of Chiapas). EZLN continued to use violent strategies and declared war against the Mexican government for 11 days. This violent period of the uprising was responsible of more than 300 deaths. However, after 12 days of the armed conflict, the Mexican government proposed to negotiate and apply cease-fire measures. These round table negotiations resulted in formulating the 1996 San Andreas Peace Accords which include the movement's demands and limitations. (Ronfeldt et al., 1998)

Though, the San Andreas accords were officially formatted two years after the uprising, it was implemented in 2001. The accords compelled the Mexican government to exercise fair treatment to the indigenous people in Chiapas. The Zapatista movement demanded to institutionalize their political, economic, and social rights through the Mexican constitution, and called for "territorial autonomy" to exercise full control over the native territories and their resources. Hence, the San Andreas Accords did not only guarantee cultural autonomy and political participation, but also constitutionally some form of self-determination rights and "territorial autonomy". It is prominent to mention that the Mexican government despite the accords, did not allow practically any exercise and did not grant any form of autonomy to the indigenous people at the beginning to protect the sovereignty of Mexico. However, the Zapatista movement succeeded to gain the attention of the international arena and to destabilize Mexico. This in turn led

to weaken the economic standards of the government and lowered the mutual confidence between it and the international investors. The Zapatista movement started using non-violent means, which until only in 2001, the Mexican congress accepted to launch a law that directly recognizes the multi-cultural nature of Mexico and grants the indigenous populations territorial autonomy under the united nation of Mexico. (Haar, 2004)

Thus, this territorial autonomy permits the indigenous population to exercise some form of self-determination, but not to disintegrate completely from the Mexican sovereignty. Since then, the indigenous population were able to freely choose their political status and practice their economic, social, and cultural rights through their participation in the decision-making processes. Moreover, the Zapatista movement introduced new relationship between the indigenous population and the Mexican government which was vivid by the development of the “National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Towns” (CDI). CDI was the framework by which the indigenous population could channel their legal opinions and protect their rights. Though, it is still crucial to outline that the tasks handled by the CDI did not meet the required needs of the indigenous population and fell short to tackle the grievous rights cases. (Scholk, 2007)

Therefore, it is important to point out that the duration of the armed conflict between the Mexican state and the Zapatista movement was not only short but has yielded to constitutional changes that guarantees the practice of territorial autonomy to the populations in Chiapas. Moreover, the state’s reaction to the movement was only violent at the very beginning of the movement’s eruption, which has changed later on to negotiations, and cease fire procedures.



The Zapatista movement was able to utilize new forms and modes of resistance through transnationalism and succeeded to win the support of both the national and the global civil societies. In other words, the Zapatista movement succeeded to find relevance of its goals or aims not only across the Mexican borders but beyond them as well. The movement developed out of the local and indigenous populations' grievances and launched its resistance against the Mexican state but was able to frame its resistance to also be against the neo-liberal policies and framework that encompassed the Latin America region. Thus, the Zapatista movement did not only succeed to raise the awareness on their situation worldwide but was able to link itself to other communities outside the Mexican borders. The movement was capable to do this due to the growing grassroots resistance in the region rejecting a similar social and economic deterioration, the failure of the electoral democracy and the existent governments to satisfy their population and fulfil the promises of social justice and political participation. The Zapatista movement by then was able to construct new distinctive social spaces and set itself for a broader scheme of grievances beyond the short-term goal behind the outburst of the armed rebellion. The Zapatista movement was always keen to identify itself as a rebel movement and not as a revolution. This is because the movement's main aim is not to get control of the state power, but to establish another framework that guarantee for the indigenous population a more democratic, participatory, and just rule. The Zapatista movement aimed to not only establish new collective identities but to reinforce the existent indigenous identities that are located elsewhere. (Oleson, 2004) Therefore, the Zapatista movement established a coherent network with other regional movements, that it become a part of "anti-systemic movement of movements" fighting the deteriorating results of the neoliberal policies and globalization.

Moreover, the Zapatista movement was able to be also visible in the international media at the very beginning of its eruption. It could in the first week of the uprising in 1994, to grasp the attention of over 140 Mexican and international NGOs, that they rushed in to cover the incidents in Chiapas. The Zapatista movement thus, was the leading example of “governing from below”, and it showed that through establishing its own local and micro autonomy project for its indigenous population in Chiapas. The Zapatista movement established distinct social and political practices for its indigenous people in Chiapas away from the Mexican framework of rule. These practices consolidated its continuous process of seeking its population’s demands of human rights, resource allocation and territorial autonomy. (Scholk, 2010)

The Zapatista movement did not only succeed to reach out in a short time to other regional movements and the global civil society, but it also won the support of several minority groups other than the Zapatistas within Mexico. Despite that the movement is mainly composed of the “Zapatistas” or the indigenous people in Chiapas, but it allowed some non-indigenous leadership. The movement portray itself as an “indigenous peasant movement” and is representing the various indigenous communities living in Chiapas. Thus, the movement’s support base was domestically from seven indigenous groups like Tzeltal, Tzozil, Chol, Tjolobal, Zoque, Kanjobal and Mame. These groups constituted almost the quarter of the Chiapas’s population, but the movement succeeded to win the corroboration of the rest of the indigenous groups even if they are not directly committed to the movement. (Schmal, 2019)

Hence, it is important to pinpoint that the Zapatista movement was able to win the attention of the international community at a very short time interval through transnationalism. Not only that, but it also succeeded to construct new distinctive social spaces and set itself for a broader scheme of grievances beyond the short-term goal

behind the outburst of the armed rebellion. This has helped in linking itself to other national societal groups, regional movements, the global civil society and easily to fight for a demand or a cause that grasped the international attention and support. The movement has also changed its tactics and pursue mass mobilizations or civil disobedience techniques which could easily get international backings.

Therefore, according to the thesis's focal point, the Zapatista movement succeeded to attain territorial autonomy and created the national and the international awareness to the indigenous population living in Chiapas, and in Mexico. In addition, it had pushed for constitutional reform that outline the multicultural and multiethnic nature of the Mexican nation. It did not only attain the expansion of political rights to its population and assigned these communities greater autonomy and changing the subordinate position they were in by the Mexican government., but it also permitted their practice of traditions and languages Accordingly, the Mexican government was pressured to develop Federal agencies to handle the indigenous issues like the CDI (discussed above). The Zapatista movement's armed struggle with the Mexican state was short in duration and was launched after the implementation of the NAFTA agreement which besides its negative economic influence over the populations in Chiapas but has reinforced several political reforms. These political reforms have opened some political opportunities for the movement's struggle against the Mexican state. That the movement was not only able to put an end to the indigenous exclusion and oppression but to resonate their solidarity around the globe and portray itself as the Global Justice Movement. The Zapatista movement was also able to establish strong transnational networks and coherent national popular support). In other terms, the Zapatista movement established a new kind of authority which is the moral authority by which

they were able to strongly link themselves to the indigenous communities, international community and to challenge the hegemonic power of the Mexican state.

### ***3.2 The Kurdish Movement***

The Kurdish movement was in fact a result to the very similar grand reasons to that of the Zapatista movement, oppression, and exclusion either politically, socially, or economically. The Kurdish problem since the very beginning was mainly due to the constant official and practical denial of the Kurds by the Turkish State and politics. The only time the Kurds are accepted into politics is when they are identified as citizens of the Turkish republic and being affiliated with the Turkish majority. The Turkish state ideology tends to ignore the Kurdish opponents on different levels, political, economic, and social especially during the single party system era in (1923-1946). This era was characterized by being the worst of all eras to dealing with the Kurds. Moreover, there were two kinds of deprivations practiced against the Kurds, one related to the status of the Kurds and the other to the socioeconomic conditions of them compared to the rest of societal groups within the state. These were the fueling factors to the grievances of the Kurds held during this era, which surprisingly were not translated into any form of collective action. Since then and after the 1980 coup d'état, the Kurdish movement was able to get institutionalized and established its military wing, the PKK (the Kurdistan Workers' Party which is also composed of a political wing as discussed earlier). (Dag, 2018)

Therefore, the Kurdish movement was a consequence to the constant denial of the Turkish state of the Kurds and their rights, and to the policies practiced eliminating their Kurdish identity. The Kurdish movement, in short, is a rebel movement, that at first

aimed to build a nation-state for the Kurds. This was the initial goal of the movement; however, this goal and the ideology of the movement has changed since 2005. (due to the formation of the KCK-discussed in the following pages).

It is prominent to discuss the Turkish state's reaction towards the Kurdish movement which is also pivotal to the dynamics of the conflict. The state's initial reaction towards the Kurdish movement may also have been brutal like the Mexican state but was more variant and lasted longer. This is because, since the establishment of the movement and particularly the PKK, the main ideology was to use violence, to an extent that the movement legitimized the use of violence even against the civilians. Therefore, the Kurdish movement and through the PKK (its military wing) engaged in an armed insurgency with the Turkish government most of the period of 1980s and 1990s. Accordingly, the PKK started their violent guerilla campaign in 1984. Thus, both the ideology and the practice of the Kurdish movement was not only refusing the existing government and established an armed struggle against the Turkish state but also calling for creating an independent Kurdish state. The Kurdish movement was considered slightly as a popular revolt by the early 1990s. However, this was not long enough before its popular uprising had been violently crashed by the Turkish security forces. (Davis et al., 2007) It is also pivotal to indicate that during this insurgency especially between 1984 and 1999, the Syrian government allowed for holding the movement's main camps in Syria and in the Syrian Bekaa Valley. Similarly, both the Iraqi and the Iranian states assisted the Kurdish movement in constructing camps for its military wing (PKK) on their lands. These camps were considered as safe havens for the movement during the armed conflict with the Turkish army. (Bacik & Coskun, 2011)

In consequence, the Turkish state exercised several forms of repression over the movement. It arrested the leader of the movement -Abdullah Ocalan- in 1999 and that was followed by numerous cases of kidnapping, torture, disappearances and extra-judicial executions and violence under detention. Therefore, all that along with the very low economic prospects for the Kurds, contributed into more people joining the movement and fostering its strength or political power within the Turkish society. The relative success of the Kurdish movement to build national popular support in the 1990s era discussed above, is due to its ability to construct and frame the grievances of the Kurdish people in an ideological way. This was even fostered by the violent strategies used by the Turkish government to deal with the movement. Therefore, instead of halting the performance of the Kurdish movement, the Turkish state unintendedly because of its strategies fueled for much wider support base for the Kurds, and the Kurdish movement. (Çağaptay, 2007)

Moreover, the state's violent reaction continued, and the Kurdish movement had multiply engaged militarily with the Turkish state, particularly in the Kurdish dominated regions. This had led to a civil war since the 1980s and lasted till roughly the 1990s. The Turkish state during the civil war commenced to provide literacy sessions in Turkish and develop health education courses aiming to forcibly assimilate the Kurds in the Turkish nation. Not only that, but it also enforced the absolute ban of using the Kurdish language in the state. This ban was practiced until the end of the 1990s and had further been replaced with the objection to deliver any educational course in the Kurdish language. (Akyesilmen, 2013)

However, the Kurdish movement was pushing for rejecting such assimilation policies and further glorified those who stuck to the Kurdish culture and resisted the Turkish state's actions. This was then considered as one of the main goals the Kurdish movement was seeking to achieve. It was also portrayed as a prominent signifier to the Kurdish identity. However, this success was not long enough for various reasons, one of them was the declining capability of the Syrian state to support the Kurdish movement. This is especially that the Kurdish movement has greatly operated in and from Syria particularly in the 1990s. In consequence, the PKK leader was caught and imprisoned in 1999 which in turn have immensely affected the ideology and the practice of the Kurdish movement. For example, the Kurdish movement ceased the usage of violent methods and the guerilla warfare. Not only that, but the primary goal has shifted from creating an independent Kurdistan nation to a more ambiguous goal of seeking a form of autonomy within Turkey. This was also because that the state's violent reaction resulted in the immigration of enormous numbers of Kurds to the Western part of Turkey and to Europe throughout this period. This was foreseen as a huge hurdle to the Kurdish movement accomplishing their goals, especially that this mass emigration has negatively affected the Kurdish unity and dispersed large numbers of Kurds elsewhere either inside Turkey or outside in Europe. Thus, there were several negotiations between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state. These negotiations were conducted with the imprisoned PKK leader (Ocalan) who was reelected despite he was still in charge and taking decisions (ibid, 2013)

However, in the twenty first century, the political arena in Turkey has changed a lot and by then influenced the state's reaction towards the Kurdish movement. This was because the AKP rose to power-whose leader "Tayyip Erdogan"- was elected in 2002, and the Turkish aspirations to join the EU, its directed policies to human rights and the

Kurdish issue files. Accordingly, and since 2005, the Turkish state exerted intense pressure on the EU and the US administration to categorize the PKK as a terrorist organization. And in consequence, the PKK- the movement's military wing-was outlawed internationally not only nationally (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012) This all and with the arrest of the movement's leader in 1999 forced the movement to change its ideology and propose a new discourse of "multi-dimensional" struggle. So, the movement's ideology shifted to implement "Democratic Autonomy model", which is considered an alternative model of the Turkish nation-state. This new ideology is institutionalized by establishing the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) in 2005. KCK aimed through this multi-dimensional project to establish a new social, cultural, and political struggle against the Turkish state, by which it would be able to build a Kurdish democratic nation away from the Turkish nation-state. Thus, the goal of the Kurdish movement changed from aiming of the secession from the Turkish state, to establishing a parallel democratic model to it, to rule over the Kurdish nation. (Saeed, 2014)

Thus, since 2005, the Kurdish movement has pursued a different path away from the security sphere to attain its goals and further has altered their goals. It espoused the democratic confederacies and in turn refused any form of nationalism or separatism. It sought to establish new local bodies for self-governing within the Turkish borders. Therefore, the Kurdish movement sought to pursue some form of territorial autonomy through developing this as a political settlement between itself, the Kurds, and the Turkish government. Accordingly, Ocalan announced the practice of "democratic autonomy" and the development of a bottom-up autonomous self-governance through the local communities. In addition to this, the Kurdish movement started creating various forms of organizations and institutions empowered to self-govern. Like in 2007



it established the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) which is considered a shadow parliament. Moreover, several schools were built and local councils as well. While these institutions were developed to deliver the Kurdish movement's ideas and principles to the population and exercise its approach of democratic autonomy. The Union of Committees in Kurdistan (KCK) on the other hand, played an important role to preserve the Kurdish rights within the Turkish politics. (Castells ,2012).

Consequently, the state's reaction changed slightly and has officially announced implementing "Kurdish Opening" policy in 2009. Moreover, the Kurdish-language channel was allowed to operate in the Turkish state television and studying Kurdish in multiple universities were accepted as well. Not only that, the highly dense Kurdish regions were better off economically but still not like the Western region of Turkey. Further, the pro-Kurdish parties could participate in the local civilian politics. This means that the Kurdish movement was able to roughly attain some of its goals and further it could through its political party of the HDP to win some votes of the non-Kurdish electorate in Western Turkey. And in the 2015<sup>th</sup> election, the HDP won around 80 seats in the parliament and became the first pro-Kurdish party which won 10% of election threshold. However, there were no further concrete political steps taken by the Turkish government to settle the Kurdish problem, and it resumed operating with anti-terror laws against the Kurds, and of listing the Kurdish problem as a "Security Problem". Furthermore, the Turkish state did not welcome the KCK much and has perceived it as another framework to the PKK, that aims to disintegrate the Turkish state. Accordingly, the Turkish government set various missions of arrests of the KCK members in 2009 and 2010. There were several secret negotiations initiated between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish officials between 2009 and 2011, but these all brought to halt after 2011 national elections. In 2012 and 2013, there were another set

of multiple announcements of the need to hold peace talks and both sides seemed to see an urge to reach a settlement. However, these talks were secret and were difficult to trace its progress. (Casier et al., 2013)

Though, the eruption of the Arab spring and particularly with the development of Rojava and the PYD, the relationship between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state further worsened. This is especially that the PYD had reproduced the first tactics and the practices of the PKK. This besides that, while the Kurdish movement used its ambiguous approach of democratic autonomy to allow for “self-defense” practices against the Turkish government, led to the proliferation of the revolutionary violence again that was halted since 1999. Furthermore, the guerilla activities did not only resume but were shifted from the mountains to the high dense Kurdish cities. This all resulted in a return of military repression by the Turkish government (AKP-led government) against the Kurdish movement, specifically with the rise of the number of urban guerilla warfare in 2015. (Park, 2016)

Not only that, but the development of PYD was also backed by the American recognition has further stimulated the Kurdish movement to launch similar urban guerillas like the successful one in Kobane. This by then intensified the armed struggle between the movement and the AKP government. Further, the success of the HDP to win seats in the parliament (which directly oppose to the presidential system) in the 2015<sup>th</sup> elections, added much to the violent practices. Even though, the Kurdish movement’s “declared autonomy” was announced in several regions of various Kurdish cities like in Diyarbakir, Cizre and Silopi, the success of the PYD in Syria was not attained in Turkey. This is because the Kurdish popular revolt in Turkey failed to have the enough strength nor the capabilities against the civil and military power of Turkey.

The Turkish state allowed the security forces to forcibly bring down the Kurdish

insurgency and impose curfews in various regions and cities. In consequence, it was documented by the International Crisis group that there were around 1700 people killed. Not only that, but most of the Kurdish civilian population had escaped before the Turkish curfews were implemented. (Leezenberg, 2016)

The Kurdish movement -unlike the Zapatista movement- was not able to attain strong transnational networks nor to build a wider national mass support. Unlike the Zapatista movement, the Kurdish movement has not reached out to the international community at the beginning of its eruption, but rather only at the phase of the civil war through diasporas when a large number of the Kurdish community has immigrated to different European countries. And despite that these diasporas have created various associations in several countries but their influence over the Kurdish struggle against the Turkish state was minor, and that their existence in the international media was limited. In addition, the Kurdish movement's strategy was to develop a coherent Kurdish support base, and by then it depended heavily on mobilizing and winning the collaboration of the Kurdish societal groups only. This in turn affected its popular support nationally which was limited only to the Kurdish communities and neglected other societal groups. For instance, the Kurdish movement linked the Kurdish national affairs to the Kurdish women's issue in Turkey, promising the liberation of both, the Kurds, and the Kurdish women. It was not able to find the linkage to other movements or groups nor to frame its goal in a way to win sufficient international attention and support. It has only limited its approach to a specific community. (Novellis, 2018)

Thus, in conclusion, the Kurdish movement in Turkey was not only engaged in longer struggle with the Turkish state compared to the Zapatista's struggle, but it also failed to attain any of its goals. In other words, it was not able either to hold on to its relative political success at the beginning, not to pursue territorial autonomy (my measure of

success). It, nevertheless, reengaged in an armed struggle with the Turkish government that led to a huge loss to its societal credibility and political achievements. The Kurdish movement was not able to construct transnational networks at the beginning of its eruption but rather at the civil war phase. This is because it was able to have an international reach out through the diasporas who immigrated to different European countries. However, the diasporas influence over the dynamics of the struggle was limited in scope compared to the Zapatista's. Not only that, unlike the Zapatista movement, the Kurdish movement was not able to reframe its goals to win the international attention and support and limited its national mass support to the Kurdish communities within Turkey only. Last but not least, the movement's insurgency was launched at a time where there were no political reforms implemented by the state until the 2000s and involved several forms of external interventions by different states and states.

### ***3.3 The Polisario Front***

The western Saharan conflict which is the earliest and the longest struggle among the three rebel movements under study, has started in 1975.

The conflict started when the Morocco's' king succeeded to persuade Madrid with the help of the US pressure to decolonize the Spanish Sahara. The Spanish government sought to avoid a probable colonial war and handed the Spanish Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania without counselling with the Western Saharans or the Sahrawis (the natives of the region). Consequently, Morocco has claimed that the Western Sahara region is a part of its territory and confronted Mauritanian's counter claim. These claims were

refused and opposed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and announced the right of the Saharawis of independence. Since then, the Sahrawis launched their insurgency against the Moroccan state demanding their independence. However, Morocco has invaded the region and allowed the settlement of 350,000 Moroccan civilians there. This invasion was known as the Green March. The Green March resulted in the fleeing of nearly half of the Sahrawis population from 1975 to 1976. There, they established the Polisario Front and the military wing SPLA. The Polisario Front was militarily and diplomatically supported by Algeria as well. This has allowed the movement to establish its headquarters and four camps of refugees near Tindouf in Algeria. Morocco sought to counter such support and asked its allies (ie, France, Saudi Arabia & United States) for assistance. Since then, and the struggle has been a stalemate because neither Morocco was able to destroy the Polisario Front without invading Algeria, nor the Polisario Front can win their territory back. Therefore, likewise the Saharawis have faced several forms of marginalization like the other two cases. (Mundy, 2006)

However, unlike the Zapatista movement, the external intervention of foreign actors was -as briefly outlined above- since the early beginning of the conflict. This was either through the ICJ at the very beginning or when the UN has intervened and sought arbitration in 1975 from the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The UN aimed to legally articulate which conflicting party has the right of sovereignty over the Western Saharan region. The ICJ in turn has unanimously announced and recognized the right of self-determination to the Polisario front and the Saharawis. (Omar, 2008)

The external intervention was also in terms of the Algerian support to the Polisario Front and the Moroccan allies. These external interventions triggered the Moroccan

government to directly engage with the Polisario Front. In other words, the Morocco's allies -France, United States and Saudi Arabia- assisted in building a large defensive barrier that repelled the Polisario fighters and halved geographically the Western Sahara region from north to south., and also in confronting the Western Saharan movement militarily. Thus, this external intervention fueled the armed struggle and assisted the Moroccan government through the built wall to have a control over the disputed territory. This wall was also supplemented by technological radars and sensors to detect the Western Saharan movement's fighters. This all affected the movement's control over the territory and resulted in high Moroccan presence. Morocco was able to exercise a physical control over two thirds of the Western Saharan region, but this did not result in deteriorating the movement operating from Algeria. It rather led to develop a Moroccan-Algerian hostile relation, especially when Algeria closed the land borders from its side since 1994 affecting immensely the tourism, which till now are not reopened. Algeria further decided not to open the borders until there are coherent settlement is implemented to the Western Saharan conflict. Since then, Polisario front was able to develop its headquarters and multiple camps for its refugees in Algeria as discussed earlier. Further, the Polisario Front established the SADR (Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic) in 1976 after the Spanish and Mauritania's withdrawal from the territory and turned the conflict from the very beginning from being only a struggle between the Moroccan government and a movement, to a conflict between Morocco and a government in exile. In other words, the movement performed its armed struggle for the sake of legitimizing the SADR. (Miller, 2014)

Another form of the external intervention was through the various OAU and UN settlement proposals. The conflict was brought to halt through cease-fire procedures

after the UN's (United Nations) proposal to mediate in 1988. This proposal was a form of continuity to what the OAU (Organization of African Unity) started in 1976 till 1984. These OAU efforts pinpointed that the solution should be a cease fire practice that is followed by a referendum on secession of Western Saharan region from Morocco. Despite the strong favorability to such proposal from the movement, and the official acceptance announced by the Moroccan government in 1981, there was not any concrete or practical steps taken to implement such proposal. In consequence, the OAU confirmed on the SADR's (Polisario-led Saharan Arab Democratic Republic) legitimacy and recognized it as the legal government of the Western Sahara region. Accordingly, Morocco withdrew from OAU and the conflict was brought to stalemate until UN's proposal in 1988. The UN tried to set a resolution to the ongoing conflict and displayed its proposal through the Security Council in 1991. This proposal called for also a ceasefire practice, a referendum of secession but added two more articles, the repatriation of refugees and reducing and seizure of the troops. This framework yielded various point of conflicts between the two sides, like who is eligible to vote into such referendum, etc. Hence, these negotiations resulted in creating "The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)" in the 1990s which is responsible to declare the eligible voters' criteria. But France and United States opposed to such decisions and in turn the Security council declared its halt. This is especially that the Security Council does not own any enforcement setting if the results of the referendum are not approved by one of the sides. (Mordi, 2015)

Furthermore, there were other various proposals to have a "third way settlement" for the conflict that would lie between the full independence and the full integration of the Western Sahara region within Morocco. In other words, the proposals called for granting the Polisario Front territorial autonomy, by which the movement would be able

to have enough delegated authority to create their ruling government under the higher Moroccan authority. This however was not neither accepted by the Moroccan government nor the movement, and such multiple negotiations have fostered the mutual hostile between the two sides. Based on that, and in 2001, James Baker, the special envoy of the United Nations declared another draft for a conflict settlement proposal. This draft ensured that the Polisario front should be granted a four-year significant form of autonomy which would be followed by a “final status” referendum. This proposal despite being approved by the Moroccan government this time, got opposed to by the movement. This was the case for so many years, while the Moroccan government does not offer a concrete approach to grant the movement a realistic form of autonomy and refuses any form of independence, the movement objects to any settlements away from the 1991 plan. (Theofilopoulou, 2006)

In addition to the external interventions, the state’s reaction to the movement was back to violence which had resulted in the resumption of the armed conflict especially after the 2000 referendum got abandoned. The Moroccan government continued to practice its repressive measures against the Sahrawis in their territory. The 2003 Peace Plan set by Baker, allowed for Moroccans who are listed as natives in the Western Saharan region to vote in the referendum. This posed a lot of pressure over the movement and its credibility in front of its population. Consequently, the armed conflict resumed in May 2005. This 2005-armed conflict started when a Western Saharan demonstration being forcibly combatted by the Moroccan police, which infuriated many of the Sahrawis activists who pushed to respread the pro-independence sentiment across the population. The situation got worsened with the enormous numbers of arrests to the protestors and their tortures, and with the brutal assaults against the youth Sahrawis, which has led to the death of one in the streets of Al-ayun. Accordingly, the movement



started to use civil disobedience strategies and called itself as “Intifadah al-Istiqlal” or “struggle of independence”. This has not only showed the shift of the movement’s practice, but the conflict was also handed to the nationalist Sahrawis living in the occupied Western Sahara or who lived under the Moroccan rule. However, despite the movement’s change of strategies, the Moroccan government was still able to rule over the Western Sahara to a large extent, through leverages to the obedient citizens. Especially that, the economic conditions of the western Saharan region were low and deteriorating. (ibid, 2006)

Unlike the other two rebel movements, the Polisario Front won as outlined earlier an international recognition from several international organizations and states. This was even consolidated in 2009. In 2009, twenty-one members out of total fifty in the African Union, have officially recognized Western Sahara as an independent sovereign state. This means that almost half of the union have agreed to legitimize the western Saharan region self-determination. However, only nine of the twenty-one states allowed for diplomatic relationships through hosting the Western Saharan movement’s representatives in their capitals. In 2010, there were second round of negotiations between the Moroccan government and the Western Saharan movement supervised by the United Nations and other observer countries like Algeria and Mauritania. But these recent events of the struggle did not yield any political settlement. (Pham, 2010)

Moreover, the movement’s struggle was largely ignored, and the movement was unable to build transnational networks, despite being legally and internationally recognized. On one hand and as discussed above, the younger generation of the movement have shifted the tactical methods of the movement to only use peaceful resistance. And this

in consequence assisted much to be accepted in the international community especially within the scope of human rights issues. The movement has also succeeded to legally win the right of sovereignty over the Western Sahara region against Morocco through the ICJ in 1975 and gain the support of several states and international organizations, like the OAU, the ICJ, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Syria. In addition, the Polisario Front was also granted recognition to SADR from 70 different countries in 1987. But on another hand, the conflict has neither ended, nor won the international attention expected. In other words, the conflict is not only still a stalemate but is internationally perceived as a marginal issue either in the international political arena or the international media. This may be because of the existence of Pro-Morocco veto powers in the security council like France and US, which refuted the UN resolutions that included the option of independence or a referendum on self-determination. This is also in addition to the absence of any concrete implementation mechanism by the United Nations towards the conflict. Not only that, but unlike the Kurdish movement, there were no diasporas in the European countries or elsewhere than the government in exile in Algeria. The Polisario Front was not also able to link itself to other movements nor to reframe its goal away from national independence of the Saharawis. (Zoubir, 2018)

Not only the movement was not able to construct strong transnational networks besides the UN and ICJ recognitions, but its national base encountered divisions, too. The movement's leadership encountered a lot of internal struggles between the government in exile and the nationalists in the Western Saharan territory. This means that the movement was not only able to limit its popular support to the Saharawi communities only, but this base held divisions as well. The nationalist Sahrawis believe that the movement became inefficient and by then do not define themselves with it much as before. The Polisario Front's leadership in exile according to the nationalists, failed to

attain independence because of the external intervention and the Moroccan bilateral relations with different countries like France, and US. Therefore, the nationalist Sahrawis sought to try a different strategy away from the old ones, which is the non-violent tactics, and imitate other movements like those in Philippines and South Africa. They aim to spot the repressive practices of the Moroccan government and win the international sympathy and support. (Hodges, 2007)

In all, the Polisario front's conflict with Morocco has been unresolved for over four decades now. This is may be the longest struggle in duration among the three cases under discussion. However, the Polisario front unlike the Kurdish movement for instance was legally recognized to gain its sovereignty and to practice its self-determination rights. It was listed by the United Nations and since 1963 as one of the territories that need to be decolonized. Not only that, but the ICJ refused to support Morocco's claim of territorial integration of the Western Saharan region in 1975 and granted the Western Saharawi's the principle of self-determination. However, the movement encountered the involvement of several foreign actors since the very beginning of its eruption, was not able to develop strong transnational networks nor coherent national popular support even among the Sahrawi community and faced repressive reaction from Morocco.

### ***3.4 Conclusion & Concluding Remarks***

In conclusion, this chapter aimed through the “process tracing” mechanism to unfold the main historical events of each rebel movement under discussion and its struggle with the state. This was of high importance to help in identifying the stations of similarities and differences, and the change of causation that might have led to divergent outcomes. This has also allowed to briefly pinpoint the configuration of the three variables for each rebel movement and in turn will facilitate the examination of the causal mechanism and the interactive model in Chapter 4.

This chapter highlighted that the Zapatista movement was able to attain territorial autonomy -my measure of success-, while the other two movements did not. Not only that, but the Zapatista movement was the shortest in duration and has only engaged in an armed conflict for 12 days, compared to the other two movements. Moreover, the role of the external intervention was limited to transnational networks of the Zapatista movement and did not involve wide array of foreign actors like the other two movements. Furthermore, the states’ reaction towards the three rebel movements were very variant, despite that the three states have repressed and used violent strategies at least at one phase of the struggle.

Hence, I attempt after tracing the pivotal historical events and displaying this brief analysis to outline the different configurations of the three variables for each rebel movement in Chapter 4 and examine the causal mechanism through in-depth analysis.

Thus, Chapter 3 did not only point out the important historical stations for the three rebel movements but displayed a brief analysis by which Chapter 4 will depend on to test the causal mechanism.

#### ***Chapter IV. The Configuration of Variables***

In the previous chapters, I tried to pinpoint precisely the concepts that my thesis will focus on and display the prominent historical events of the three rebel movements that will enable me to empirically investigate the causal mechanisms leading to the different outcomes, using comparative analysis. Thus, in Chapter 2, I outlined clear identification of my interactive theoretical model, the different concepts like rebel movements and territorial autonomy, and the independent variables (hypotheses) to avoid lack of understanding or any unconscious biases when discussing and testing the causal mechanism. I proposed that my interactive model will reinforce the assumption that it is not about an existing or non-existing variable, but rather a configuration of three variables that exist in a particular sequence which yielded such divergent outcomes in the cases under discussion. Accordingly, in Chapter 3 I used process tracing to point out the sequence and the interaction of the variables for each movement and articulate the common stations and points of comparison. Not only that, but I also tried to present evidence on the three movements from the existing secondary literature and do brief analysis that I will build on for my in-depth analysis in Chapter 4. And, as discussed in Chapter 3, the Zapatista movement was able to practice territorial autonomy that was legally or constitutionally ascertained in 2001, but the Kurdish movement and the Polisario Front did not only fail to pursue such outcome but have resumed its armed conflicts with the states.

Thus, in Chapter 4, I will focus on discussing the causal variables and their configurations to explain such different outcomes and test the relevance of my interactive model and my variables which are transnationalism and popular support, external intervention, and the level of democracy within the state. This is especially that the level of democracy within the state might be an antecedent variable to the other two variables. Not only that, but its presence might have a bigger account for the ability of the Zapatista movement to practice territorial autonomy. This does not mean that the other variables are not significant but that the level of democracy might be antecedent to them and a more significant background condition.

Therefore, this chapter will discuss the rebel movements through the three different variables and point out their configurations and sequence that might have resulted in such divergent outcomes. I will first compare each variable among the three rebel movements and then pinpoint their configurations or sequence in each case in the discussion section.

#### ***4.1 Transnationalism & Popular Support***

As discussed thoroughly in Chapter 2, transnationalism and establishing political networks are sought by the rebel movements to establish a degree of popular support either internally or externally. This in turn should assist them to achieve some or all their goals. This relationship between establishing a base of supporters and the relative success of rebel movements is very fundamental because this base assists the movement in their mobilizations and to construct their repertoire of contention against their conflicting parties, i.e., the states. This means that these transnational networks and

popular support should involve internal, global, cross-border networks and connections which seek support from various national and international networks like NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) or other rebel movements. This in consequence might assist in establishing new channels by which such rebel movements can voice their concerns, or the discriminatory actions exercised against them in the inter-state system. (Vertovec, 2001) Not only that, but -as also discussed in Chapter 2-, transnationalism opens new doors of developing a social space of interaction that can transcend the official boundaries of the states and influence the dynamics of the conflict in favor of the movement. This is because through transnationalism, movements can succeed in grasping the attention of transnational actors and shed light upon the movements' concerns and goals either through lobbying such actors directly or through the media and journalists reporting about them. This largely impose a political pressure over the state and enhance the movements' effectiveness of attaining their goals. Therefore, transnationalism also affects the ability of the state control to monitor and dominate the actions of the transnational rebel movements or to control or limit the external political pressure exerted over it. Transnational networks allow the interaction to happen not only among institutions but among local people or groups in two or more different countries. These transnational interactions can vary from international conferences, international calls, and emails, to satellite TV broadcasting, to social media and internet usage, to constructing official-based agreements and negotiations among various institutions and groups. This all should also be accompanied by coherent marketing of the cause and the good presentation of the movement to win the support of the international audience. (Bob, 2006) In short, transnationalism and popular support allows the rebel movement to increase its outreach to the global civil society, and the national civil society.

In the following paragraphs, I will shed light on the degree and the extent the three movements have succeeded to win the support of the national civil society and the global civil society. I will also test the relevance of “transnationalism and popular support” as a variable to rebel movements’ attaining territorial autonomy.

#### ***4.1.1 The Zapatista movement & Transnationalism and Popular support***

First, the Zapatista movement was at a weaker situation militarily compared to the Mexican government. The Mexican government announced that the military wing of the movement -the EZLN- has only about 1500 well-armed fighters and the other thousands are poorly armed and trained. (Wager & Schulz, 1995) However, the enormous political pressure set over the government out of the transnational influence and the popular support pushed for seeking negotiations. These negotiations, however, was not successful to attain territorial autonomy. But the Zapatista movement was able to maintain its political strength through the flow of moral, tactical, and indirect assistance from different supporters and transnational networks around the globe. In the following, there are two subsections, one will discuss thoroughly the strategies used by the Zapatista movement and the second will analyze the effect of the strategies and the hypothesis over the outcome of the movement.

##### ***4.1.1.1 Its strategy***



The Zapatista movement was able to construct transnational networks at the very beginning of its struggle. Not only that, but the Zapatista movement was also able to take control of four Mexican towns and the major city of San Cristobal in southern Mexico, at the same day of the uprising eruption. The Mexican government faced a huge political pressure not only from the Zapatista movement but from their new base of support established through the usage of media or from the national and international linkages with NGOs. This all has resulted in the Mexican government announcing a unilateral cease-fire and allowing the Zapatista movement to not only hold on their arms but the territory of Chiapas as well, only after twelve days of the struggle. Thus, the Zapatista movement used two main strategies that will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The first is winning the support from the international and national actors through establishing a common goal, and the second is grasping the attention of the media since the very beginning of the struggle.

The first strategy of the Zapatista movement was in terms of portraying itself as a new transnational movement that stands against the neo-liberalism, globalization and push for democratization in the Latin America region. By that, it could establish a common goal that fits in the international community and considered legitimate. In other words, the Zapatista movement was able to find and link its causes to other transnational networks or was able to match its concerns and goals with the probable international proponents. This has led to have higher chance of gaining their support and to widely market itself. It attained all that because there were enormous numbers of transnational NGOs and institutions that dissented the NAFTA agreements issued in 1993 and the global economic liberalization. In short, the movement's approach created a linkage between its causes and much of the Latin American NGOs that experienced similar events in 1993. (Bob,2001) For instance, these dissents to neoliberalism were solid to

various leftist's organizations which offered a wide range of support in terms of money, supplies, and further spreading the information of the Zapatista movement outside Mexico to establish broader network. Similarly, another set of various NGOs and institutions that are concerned with the humanitarian, social justice, and development backed the Zapatista movement due to the common morals and slogans. Like, the indirect support handed over by Peace Brigades international and Witness for peace to the Chiapas communities in terms of development aids. These development aids were given to the Chiapas communities as an indirect support to the Zapatista movement, to compensate any harm to them as a result of the Zapatista movement's conflict with the Mexican government. Furthermore, the international human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and International Commission of Jurists have also played prominent role through their constant investigation on any human rights abuses throughout the duration of conflict between the Zapatista movement and the Mexican state. These organizations assisted in monitoring the procedural and violent actions of the Mexican government towards the movement which risen up the pressure on it. This all has helped to keep the situation of the Zapatista's and the Zapatista movement under the focus of the international lens for over than seven consecutive years, unlike the other two movements under discussion or even the other movements operated in Mexico as well. (Ronfeldt et al., 1998)

In addition to this, the Zapatista movement was able to frame its goals and causes in a way that did not only allow the establishment of transnational networks that were essential for the persistency of the contentious politics but that developed a national base of support as well. This is because the movement did not only reject the NAFTA propositions, and embraced a pro-indigenous scheme, but also have proposed a democratic reform that the Mexican state should undergo and established it in its

territorial base of Chiapas. Moreover, it portrayed itself as an “indigenous peasant movement” which is representing the various indigenous communities living in Chiapas. Further, the Zapatista movement proposed a “National Democratic Convention” in Chiapas which had around 6000 civil society attendees and established various autonomous communities in 38 municipalities in Chiapas. By that, it succeeded to win the direct support of several minority groups other than the Zapatistas within Mexico and has even allowed some non-indigenous leadership in the movement. Hence, the movement’s support base enlarged and become consisted of seven domestic indigenous groups besides the Zapatistas like Tzeltal, Tzozil, Chol, Tjolobal, Zoque, Kanjobal and Mame. These groups constituted almost the quarter of the Chiapas’s population, but the movement was able to further win the corroboration of the rest of the indigenous groups even if they are not directly committed to the movement. In addition, it also found a huge support from indigenous organizations and indigenous rights groups like the National Congress of American Indians, the Indian Law Resourced Center, and the Assembly of First Nations. (Munoz, 2006)

The second strategy of the movement was through different modes of media networks. The Zapatista movement was visible in the international media at the beginning of its eruption and could in the first week of the uprising in 1994 to grasp the attention of over 140 Mexican and international NGOs. These NGOs rushed in to cover the incidents in Chiapas. Not only that, but the Zapatista movement placed itself in different consulates and spread their grievances and demands through the internet. It was able in the first two weeks of its struggle to have around 471 published stories on the Zapatista movement in very influential well-known international newspapers. Not only that, but the Zapatista movement sought to be constantly visible in the press through holding various conferences and interviews even at the time of the round table negotiations. It

further allowed the international journalists and the supporters to exist physically in Chiapas which was well-secured by the movement to guarantee their safety. Accordingly, it was also able to reach out to different leftist intellectuals and academics through both, its leader's -the masked Subcommander Marcos- speeches and letters, or through the internet (emails and websites) (Gilbreth & Otero, 2001)

#### ***4.1.1.2 Analysis***

Thus, based on the facts discussed above, it is important to articulate that the Zapatista movement did not acquire much of the economic nor military resources compared to the other two movements, or to the Mexican state, but its mobilizing forces were fast, high, and wide scoped either locally or transnationally as outlined above. It was able in short time to mobilize locally over than thousands of rebels to join the insurgency against the Mexican state in 1994 as mentioned earlier and was able to secure the Chiapas. Moreover, it was also able to take over several towns and the San Cristobal as its territorial base for further base of networks. In all, the Zapatista movement was positively popular in the Mexican civil society and the global society since the first two weeks of the struggle and this has assisted in spreading the information of the movement and increasing the reach out of their interviews and speeches.

The influence of such fast and wide scoped transnational networks and popular support was vivid in 1994 and in 1995. In 1994 and after only 12 days of the struggle, the Mexican government assigned governmental bureaucrats as mediators to solve the conflict and applied a unilateral cease fire measure. Also, in 1995, when the Mexican government commenced a military launch against the Zapatista movement again, the

national and the international allies were able to politically force the government to undergo another set of negotiations and halt such operations. This political pressure has resulted in issuing the 1996 San Andreas accord on indigenous rights, but with no implementation progress until 2001. (Arman, 2013) This is because, the Zapatista movement during this period was able to preserve their control over significant areas of Chiapas and could maintain its local and international support. This constant popular support was through the continuous mutual contact with their supporters through email and internet websites, and the backing from multiple transnational NGOs that backed it up in four different sectors.

Therefore, it is very crucial to outline that the Zapatista movement was able to establish fast (in the first weeks of the struggle) and wide- scoped transnational networks and popular support. These networks and base of support was through using two main strategies, which are linking itself to other movements and organizations nationally and internationally, and its high and constant presence in the media and by then in the international community.

#### ***4.1.2 The Kurdish Movement & Transnationalism and Popular support***

The Kurdish movement on the other hand, unlike the Zapatista movement faced various of problems to its approach towards transnationalism and popular support or to fostering its national and international existence. Unlike the Zapatista movement, there was not a fast or coherent strategy to transnationalism and popular support except later when large number of the Kurdish community immigrated from Turkey and created diasporas in different European countries. It also failed to win the support of the national civil

society besides the Kurdish communities. In other words, the Kurdish movement was unable to build a strong popular support base or transnational networks at the beginning of its development, nor to find linkage of its goals or causes to other movements, organizations, or societal groups. Not only that, but its strategies later on through mainly the diasporas did not also yield enough support or guarantee a wide-scoped existence in the media. Thus, in the following paragraphs, I will shed light on the strategies used by the Kurdish movement to seek transnationalism and popular support and their effect over the outcome of the movement.

#### ***4.1.2.1 Its strategy & Analysis***

First, -as discussed in Chapter 3 -since the movement's very beginning in 1982, it encountered a constitutional oppression in terms of cultural and political repression that were accompanied by the embargo of using the Kurdish language in public that was later lifted in 1991. Thus, the Kurdish movement was not able to vocally market itself either locally or internationally to gain the needed the support. However, in 1980 and the military coup witnessed in Turkey, many of the Kurdish movement's leaders and nationalists have fled to Europe and have created an opportunity of diasporic transnationalism. (Bruinessen ,1998) It sought through the fleeing leaders to establish a political space in Europe by which it develops a condensed network of supporters. It was able especially with constant flow of Kurdish nationalists to Europe to develop eight associations in Germany, one each of the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and France. These associations were merely established to tackle the problems faced by the Kurdish immigrants in Europe and then to back up the Kurdish movement in Turkey

when needed. Further, and by the late 1990s, the Kurdish movement was able through its rising existence in Europe to expand its influence and participate in the political lobbying for the Kurdish rights and autonomy either in Turkey or in the other European countries. It is also crucial to pinpoint that over the years, the Kurdish movement could construct other associations in various European countries that enabled the movement to mobilize thousands of Kurds living in Europe at the critical events happening in Turkey. That it was relatively able to grasp the attention of the international community like those of Germany and Belgium especially with the rising cases and events of human rights' violations. (Inglis, Akgonul & Tapia, 2009)

However, despite all this, the Kurdish movement could not maintain such support nor widen its scope. This is because the Turkish state both of its right and left wings were able to construct transnationalism relationships with different levels of organizations and institutions ranging from the grassroots groups to other forms of formal state institutes in Europe. This left the diasporic transnationalism of the movement inefficient. The movement's aspires were also brought down with the Turkish stance towards the supporters of the Kurdish movement within Turkey itself. It for instance, politically expelled seven members of the parliament because they have participated in an international conference in Paris 1989 that was organized by the Kurdish institute for discussing the Kurdish problem in Turkey. Not only that, but there were neither direct support or indirect assistance given when the movement's leader Abdullah Ocalan was expelled out of Syria and sought to be accepted as an asylum in any of the European countries. Further, the Kurdish movement and particularly its military wing of the PKK -after an intense Turkish pressure and the movement's resumption of armed conflict after a period of ceasefire- was listed by 2004, as a terrorist organization by the

Council of the European Union and since then it got nationally and internationally sided. (Uzun, 2014)

The Kurdish movement may have tried to transnationally expand its base, using media like the Zapatista's but it was also not efficient enough. Despite that the Kurdish movement started to publish different publications through various Kurdish journals in Istanbul after 1908, it was not long enough until the Turkish state banned the Kurdish press. Not only that, but in the twentieth century, the Kurdish movement has merely depended on the press in exile to publicize their publications. Further, the Kurdish movement's journals did not have much reach out. For instance, the Kurdish journals in Sweden was only able to have a circulation of less than one thousand reader. Both the publications and the speeches made by Ocalan (before his capture) were rarely in the Kurdish language but rather in Turkish. Moreover, with the development of the Satellite Television stations MED-TV, the Kurdish movement was able to utilize such medium to have a relatively wider reach out. It was able to circulate much information on the movement from these stations in Europe, away from the Turkey's Official media they are banned of. These independent stations and particularly the MED-TV was operating in different countries in the MENA region and in Europe. However, at the time of Ocalan's arrest in 1999, several movement's leaders instigated for violent operations against the Turkish state. This resulted in the Independent Television Commission to decide the suspension, the calling off the MED-TV and further to dismiss their license to operate. Accordingly, the Kurdish movement turned to the usage of internet as an alternative to the satellite Television. It created different Kurdish websites by which it was able to spread a wider range of different types of information. It circulated various journalistic and academic articles, Kurdish music, historical displayed information on the Kurds and the Kurdish movement and even further their



political propaganda through the internet. Though, this did not result in gaining much attention from the international community but resulted in increasing the intensity of the repressive measures by the Turkish state through destructing various Kurdish villages. (Sinclair & Smets, 2014)

In addition, the Kurdish movement could not widen their popular support in Turkey as the Zapatistas. As outlined earlier, the Zapatista movement could win the support different societal sectors within Mexico and found common stations between itself and other movements and groups within Mexico. On the contrary, the Kurdish movement outcasted in 1978 any other Kurdish political groups away from the movement or from the PKK (its military wing), and further in 1991 it forcibly dominated the legal Kurdish parties either through intimidation or threatful propaganda. The Kurdish movement throughout its struggle, has also aimed to win the support of the Kurds only. It was not concerned to win the support of other Turkish societal groups. It changed its ideology over the time, but in a way that attracted different factions of the Kurdish masses and not any others. This is although it had a Marxist-Leninist core that might help in constructing a wider base of national and international support. Despite all this, the Kurdish movement's tactics were not only attacked internationally or by the Turkish government, but by the Kurdish communities within Turkey themselves. This is because the movement has for several years launched violence and brutality against the civilians. It sought selective violence against the regions that refuse to support the movement and attacked their families causing enormous numbers of deaths. Thus, the movement has disrupted a lot of Kurds living in Turkey and other Kurdish groups and parties. The Kurdish movement was able through diaspora to establish different Kurdish associations in different countries as pinpointed but failed to win the international sympathy or the national backing of other factions within Turkey. It

however, built a national base of network through intimidation and threatful techniques rather than collaboration and support. (Davis et al, 2012)

The Kurdish movement has faced another issue regard its ability to pursue transnationalism. It encountered an existent competition between itself and other Kurdish movements in the MENA region. Each movement was targeting a set of supporters through by which it guarantees a flow of resources and assistance. The Kurdish movement in Turkey is not the only movement that aims to fight for the Kurdish rights, especially that the Kurdish groups are dispersed geographically in multiple states and each has its own propaganda. Thus, such competition led to radicalize the Kurdish movement in Turkey and has evolved a lot of grievances within the dispersed Kurdish movements and communities. This means that the Kurdish movement in Turkey was not even able to link itself to other Kurdish movements in the region. Therefore, the Kurdish movement was not neither united nor able to win the support of its own community through its fight with the Turkish state. (O'Connor, 2014)

In all, the Kurdish movement in Turkey unlike the Zapatista movement, was not able to establish a fast and wide-scoped transnational networks and popular support at the beginning of the struggle. Not only that, but it could not effectively display itself in the media nor to link its goals and concerns to other movements and organizations elsewhere. However, it was able through the diasporas to construct different associations and exert Kurdish lobbying in various European countries. This might have relatively grasped the attention of the international community yet was not efficient to change the outcomes nor to win the direct or indirect support through them.

### ***4.1.3 The Polisario Front & Transnationalism and Popular support***

The Polisario front's transnationalism and popular support was the least of the three rebel movements in terms of its outcomes and reach out compared to the other two movements. There was not a coherent strategy neither at the beginning nor through the struggle. Though, it was able to construct some transnational networks, but its existence in the national and international media is very limited. Not only that, it was not also able to have diasporas like the Kurdish movement which made its popular support and transnational networks much more fragile.

#### ***4.1.3.1 Its strategy & Analysis***

The Polisario front conflicts with the Moroccan government and specifically since the mid-1970s had resulted in the displacement of Sahrawis from the Western Saharan region to various refugee camps in Tindouf in Algeria. (Mundy, 2006) This has not only enabled the large physical existence and control of the Moroccan state of most of the

Western Saharan region, but to limit the Saharawis from staying and defending their territory. In other words, unlike the Zapatista movement, the Polisario Front was unable to invite international actors to Western Sahara or grasp the attention to the conflicted territory.

In regardless of this, the Polisario front sought through the SADR to establish wide-scope networks between the refugee camps and various governmental institutions around the globe. It was able to win an international judicial recognition for the SADR and by the early 1989s 50 states recognized the SADR as the legitimate political representation to the Sahrawi people either inside or outside the Western Sahara region. This means that the Polisario front was granted a “Judicial sovereignty” by almost the third of the UN member states. (Bank & Heur, 2007) This might seem to exceed the achievements of both movements out of their transnationalism activities. But this is not the case because most of the 50 states were former colonies in Africa, Latin America, and some from the Middle East. The recognition did not involve any states from the “First world” states. This in turn deteriorated the constant flow of resources and the political support the movement needed especially at times of Western Sahara conflict’s discussion in the UN security council. This is because that many resolutions in the movement’s favor were vetoed against by countries like France and US. Moreover, while the Polisario front failed to achieve any settlement for decades, some states recalled their recognition. This does not mean that the Polisario front was not able to construct several bases of networks. It was able to get several aid programs from regional organizations like the OAU, and from different states but for limited periods like Libya, Tunisia, Syria, and Iran. Though, this assistance as outlined was not long enough nor consistent.

The Polisario front has also tried to build transnational networks with non-state actors. It targeted several human rights NGOs, Western support communities and even multiple political activists. It aimed to grasp the attention of the international arena through their publications and their role as media influencers. However, this was not neither efficient enough especially unlike the Kurdish movement, there was almost a non-existent of the diaspora for the Sahrawis in the west. This was due to the very small population of the Saharawi people in general, and that almost all of them live in the refugee camps in Algeria since 1970s. Therefore, the awareness campaigns launched for the Polisario front and the Saharawi people were leaded by non-Sahrawis, which made them either overstated or understated rather than discussing the real dynamics of the conflict. (ibid., 2007)

Thus, as elaborated above, the Polisario Front aimed for winning the international support mainly through international recognition. On one hand, it was able to obtain a widespread international recognition for either the movement or for their goals of self-determination. It was backed and assisted by several states like Algeria that encompassed its refugee camps and handed over a lot of financial assistance and aid programs. It depended on the international law of being on its side to further expand its transnationalism strategies to foster the international diplomacy. Despite all of that, this international support the movement won from different international institutions was not efficient nor concrete to help the movement to attain its goals or to reach out any possible settlement with the Moroccan state. The ICJ for instance, does not own any enforcing mechanism over the Moroccan state, neither do the different international institutions or the human rights organizations. Moreover, the movement tried to raise the global awareness of the conflict and the situation of the Sahrawis through organizing large marathons in the camps and hosting film festivals etc., but this has not

strengthened the support base of the movement nor was able to exert pressure over the Moroccan government to seek settlements. Additionally, the supporters whom the Polisario Front leaned on for decades like Algeria, retreated from supporting it directly in its armed conflict with Morocco. (Miller, 2014)

The Polisario Front with the technological advances in the media like the cellular phone, the internet and the Satellite televisions attempted to reestablish a wider base of support compared to the previous period. It was expected that these technological advancements will enable the Polisario Front to circulate the information more efficiently about its struggle and the present situation. Not only that, but to construct new channels of communication and networks. However, this was not the case for various reasons. The Moroccan monarchy has exerted enormous pressure over the Polisario Front to limit the movement's and the Sahrawis access to the media. The Moroccan government had multiply blocked and halted their access to public telephones and interrupted their signals of the radio stations and broadcasts. This made the circulation of the Polisario Front's news way harder. Though, it is important to outline that the Western Sahara conflict enjoyed limited and intermittent coverage by other global channels like the British Broadcasting company (BBC). (Deubel, 2015)

The technological advances allowed for building relationships between the Polisario front and several NGOs or activist groups, though they were weak. The Polisario Front's activist groups like the Collective of Sahrawi Human Rights Defenders was able to establish transnational networks with foreign based non-profit organizations like Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara and Sandblast. These networks were possible and established through different web linkages and the new social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Furthermore, these advances assisted the movement to construct new ways of connections with several international advocates

of human rights and development aid as well. As a result, the Polisario front could work on the linkages with various Spanish NGOs which historically helped in providing aid programs to the Sahrawi refugees. Furthermore, it sought to prepare with the support of such networks huge festivals for displaying Sahrawis arts and culture in different countries like the three-day festival held in London in 2007. Though, the positive influence of these technological advances over the movement's transnationalism was multiply blocked and combatted. For instance, one of the important Polisario's media agencies- Equipe Media- which stressed on spreading information and news through Facebook and direct emails from 2009 to 2013, got hacked multiples times. This blocking and hacking operations continued until the agency decided to change the host server to operate from Algeria in 2014. Not only that, but the movement's festivals did not yield any outcomes beyond winning the sponsorship of different NGOs to them. (ibid, 2007)

In all, the development of media technologies may have immensely assisted the movement to increase its mediums by which it can raise awareness through. Though, the continuous restrictions and blockage enforced over the Western Sahara's press and broadcast media has limited its benefits or its reach out. Not only that, but the failure of the movement to win a strong base of supporters away from the international institutions that suffer from the absence of any enforcing mechanisms, led to a huge international ignorance to the conflict and the situation in Western Sahara. Moreover, the movement has also lacked to pursue its presence in the international media neither at the beginning of the struggle as the Zapatista for example nor throughout the struggle. This all might have negatively affected the communication among the Sahrawis and facilitates the documentation of events. Thus, the Polisario front was internationally

ignored and its conflict that has spanned for decades is much neglected from the international arena or the international media. It was not able to win regional allies other than Algeria, nor strong international allies. In other words, the Polisario front merely reckoned on the international legal and diplomatic values to win its sovereignty rather than following the tactical methods of the Zapatista. This shows that, it paid less attention and was inefficient to enlarge its base of networks and gain the support of strong allies to put enough pressure over the Moroccan government which was backed by several first world states like France and US. It might have won the legitimization of their goals from the international community like in 1975 by the ICJ but at the same time was listed as the “forgotten conflict” for decades now due to its stalemate.

I need to point out that despite that the reasons of ignoring the Western Sahara’s conflict in the international community and in international media are beyond the scope of my thesis, but they are of a huge importance for better understanding of the conflict.

## ***4.2 External Intervention***

External intervention is one of the variables that I think it might have affected the outcomes of the three rebel movements under the study. But before discussing it and test its relevance to be considered one of the causal mechanisms that yielded such divergent outcomes between the three rebel movements, it is important to outline its conceptual meaning in the literature.

As outlined in Chapter 2, external intervention in fact has so many types and effects.

There is no agreed definition in all the academics to this concept; however, it is possible



to display its certain features. Intervention in general and according to Ted Robert Gurr in his paper of “Third party intervention in Ethnic conflicts”, may take the form of either giving assistance, withdrawing it or to changing the status and the kind of relationships exist between the state and the society. It also may result in changing the prospects of the ongoing conflict. External intervention may use different strategies. Military action is not the sole tool used as a strategy, but there are other tools like the economic sanctions or financial assistance for instance. Hence, external intervention may use both tools as a mixed strategy combining the economic punishment along with the military interference. The intervention can also be carried out by major powers unilaterally, through a multilateral action of group of countries, or an international organization such as the UN. Moreover, external intervention may take sides, or it can be neutral with the aim to get the conflicting parties at the table of negotiations and display possible settlements. (Gurr,2004) Furthermore, and also as elaborated in Chapter 2, the literature outlined that the early external intervention in favor of either the rebel movement or the state, may lead either to decisive victory to the state or to prolonging of the armed conflict rather than granting the rebel movement their targeted goal, which is for my cases, territorial autonomy. Therefore, it is very crucial to differentiate the political pressure or support that results from the external intervention and that from the transnationalism and popular support. External intervention involves states or governmental international institutions like the UN for example. However, transnationalism and popular support involves the global and the national civil societies.

Thus, based on what is elaborated above, I will tackle each rebel movement and test the existence and the influence of any external intervention carried out by either a state (s) or an international institution(s) throughout the duration of the conflicts.

#### ***4.2.1 The Zapatista movement & External Intervention***

The Zapatista movement, in its conflict with the Mexican state did not encounter any form of external intervention neither from a state or group of states nor from an international institution. However, the role of transnationalism explained earlier were decisive in its social netwar against the Mexican state. In other words, the Zapatista movement relied on the transnational NGOs mobilization and the political pressure they enforce over the Mexican state. Its media propaganda allowed for grasping many US. and Canadian activist NGOS that supported the movement and motivated other NGOs to back it up. This has further enabled the movement to develop a highly and dense network of different NGOs and other human right and indigenous rights movements. These delegations along with wide array of journalists and media companies who were welcomed in Chiapas to cover the incidents, enhanced the political position of the movement. This has allowed the movement to organize several demonstrations, marches, and peace caravans in Mexico and even in front the Mexican consulates in United States for example. Thus, this intertwined network between the movement and the various NGOs and organizations kept the conflict in the international media and enabled the movement to widely display its views and stances. Consequently, the Mexican state was under severe political pressure to defend its violent actions and its prospects regards its domestic issues with the Zapatista movement. This is especially that the movement could build a strong linkage of goals and demands that surpass the national borders of several states, and that have won the international attention and support. These goals were mainly the enforcement of democratic values through non-

violent means, respect for human rights and the cease fire procedures. (Ronfeldt & Arquilla, 2001)

So, as pointed out above, there was not any external intervention either from a state, group of states or even from any international organizations to support any of the conflicting parties or to act as mediators. Instead, after the insurgency held in January 1994, as outlined earlier, the government bureaucrats stepped forward as mediators and created the “Congress Peace Commission” (COCOPA) through which they commenced the peace process with the Zapatistas. This process started in 1995 and lasted for 10 months, which has resulted in identifying the demands and possible settlements and in signing the “San Andrea Agreement” in 1996. Despite that this peace process has halted some time in 1996 but was resumed. This is due to the effectiveness of the Zapatista movement to hold very wide-scope conferences in Chiapas and Europe, and the ability to win the international support, unlike the Mexican state. (Arman, 2013)

In all, the Zapatista movement did not encounter any external intervention that might be responsible to any of imbalances occurred to the existent balance of power between the conflicting parties. While the Mexican state owned a mighty military force and financial resources compared to the movement's, the movement reigned a huge favorable presence in the international community, the international media, and established wider support base from different NGOs and movements. This in turn assisted much to achieve its territorial autonomy especially after the huge transnational influence it succeeded to achieve and maintain.

#### ***4.2.2 The Kurdish movement & External Intervention***

On the other hand, the Kurdish movement and its conflict with the Turkish state involved several external interventions which interrupted the balance of power that would have existed without them. Along the years of conflict, there were several external interventions and changes to it in terms of its degree and influence, which - unlike the Zapatista case - halted any possible political settlement between the two conflicting parties.

The Kurdish movement enjoyed several international backings away from the diasporas or the transnational networks explained earlier. At the first period of the Kurdish movement development, it enjoyed several regional states support. Like for example, during its insurgency in 1984 till 1999, the Syrian government allowed for holding the movement's main camps in Syria and in the Syrian Bekaa Valley. Similarly, both the Iraqi and the Iranian states assisted the Kurdish movement in constructing camps for its military wing (PKK) on their lands. These camps were considered as safe havens for the movement during the armed conflict with the Turkish army. (Bacik & Coskun, 2011)

The Kurdish movement was supported in different schemes, it was helped in its recruitment processes, training, and given financial support. Not only that, but these states allowed the PKK's activities and functionality to be operated directly or indirectly from their territories. Thus, the Kurdish movement flow of military, financial and logistic assistance was constant for a long period from Syria and Iran. Moreover, at different time periods of the conflict between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state, several states like the Soviet Union, Cyprus, Greece, Armenia, Libya, Bulgaria, and Cuba provided direct logistical upholding to the Kurdish movement. For example, Greece was able to support the Kurdish movement in Turkey by enhancing their militants' political and military training and by launching fundraising campaigns to

promote it financially. The Greek intervention was also in terms of its pressure exerted over the European Union to endorse the Kurdish independence from Turkey and establish multiple governmental organizations that provide the latent political support that the movement might be in need of. Likewise, the Soviet Union (and later Russia) in specific, has legitimized the Kurdish movement and listed it as “the leader of the Kurdish national democratic struggle. It did not only officially announce its alliance to the Kurdish movement but implicitly backed the Kurdish uprisings in the 1920s against Turkey. It has also equipped the movement with the needed training, resources (both financially and militarily) and built camps for the movement in Moscow. In addition to this, Iraq and particularly northern Iraq allowed for the physical presence of the movement in its borders as well, by which it enabled to launch attacks against the Turkish state. Iran from another perspective channeled the transferred weapons and funds from Iraq and announced the Kurdish movement in Turkey as an ally. It opposed and prevented the Turkish armed forces from tracing the PKK militants existing in its borders. Furthermore, Armenia did not only militarily, financially, and politically supported the Kurdish movement in Turkey but signed a joint action plan against Turkey in Lebanon (Karaca, 2010)

However, these external interventions in favor of the Kurdish movement encountered several issues. For instance, the Syrian assistance faced a cut off in 1998, when Turkey moved mass troops along its borders with Syria. Similarly, the Iranian support shrank when a security cooperation agreement was signed between Turkey and Iran in 2004. (ibid, 2010) Though, the bases of the Kurdish movement that were developed in several states in the region, altered the balance of power and enabled the launch of different operations and attacks into Turkey.

In all, all these states and their external interventions permitted to enhance the political power of the Kurdish movement against the Turkish state in terms of accommodation, weapons, ammunitions, camps and other logistics and sustenance.

Though, the balance of power was changed again with several political developments and other external interventions that led to the conflict's stalemate. At first, the Turkish state has constantly pressured the European Union and the US to outlaw the PKK. And this has resulted in the Kurdish movement particularly the PKK getting listed by the European Union as a terrorist organization in 2002 and by the US in 2004. Furthermore, the Turkish government was able to change the political stance of the US towards the Kurdish conflict in general and in Turkey in particular. This is especially that the Turkish state has accomplished much economically and strategically. Thus, the United states in 2008 officially announced that the Kurdish movement in Turkey and specifically the PKK is a "Common enemy" between it and Turkey. Accordingly, the US and the Turkish leaders declared official statements against the PKK and there were US authorized delegations assigned to handle and combat the PKK. Not only that, but the US empowered the Turkish government with the technological and communications facilities by which it can easily monitor and launch attacks over the PKK targets. (Efegil, 2008) Similarly, the Turkish state was able to enforce much pressure over the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq to assist in resisting and restricting the PKK activities. The KRG found a huge relevance to turn over the PKK especially that it might be able to increase its economic benefits through the Turkish-KRG ties and get rid of the PKK's intimidation to its economic order. Thus, Turkey along with the US and the KRG constructed the anti-PKK block in the region. Moreover, this anti-PKK block has widened and encompassed more states that started to perceive the Kurdish movement in Turkey as a threat and an issue, like Iran and Syria. This is because the

Kurdish movement in Turkey was interlinked with several Kurdish groups both in Iran and Syria that threatened their national security. Iran was on one hand threatened by the PJAK (The Party for Free Life in Kurdistan) which was supported by the PKK and was able to stand against the Iranian troops. Syria faced similar threats to its national security and its domestic order from the PKK. Therefore, this has aroused Syria to implement several law enforcements measures that embargoed the Kurdish movement in the country specifically the PKK, launched attacks against the PKK bases and imprisoned the PKK militants. (ibid, 2011)

In all, these external interventions of several states in the MENA region and worldwide was mainly because of perceiving the Kurdish movement in Turkey as a source of threat and instability to the region. This in turn has fostered the trade relations with the Turkish state and might have relatively changed the balance of power in its favor both politically and economically.

In short, as elaborated above, the external intervention was existent at the very beginning of the movement's struggle from different states, which has not only prolonged the armed struggle but triggered the Turkish state to seek a counter-intervention as well that resulted in the conflict's stalemate, without decisive victory to any of the conflicting parties. This stalemate is still considered a failure to the Kurdish movement because my measure of success is attaining territorial autonomy which was not achieved till today.

### ***4.2.3 The Polisario Front & External Intervention***

Throughout the Polisario front's conflict with the Moroccan state, there were several kinds and degrees of external interventions like the Kurdish movement. This has largely influenced the prospects of the struggle, especially that as discussed earlier, the Polisario Front was not able to establish coherent transnational networks or effective popular support. Thus, it also unlike the Zapatista movement, could not reach out to a political settlement and rather turned into a stalemate like the Kurdish movement.

From one perspective, the intervention of the United Nations (UN) and the ICJ as international institutions in favor of the Polisario Front was vivid and direct since the beginning of the struggle. This was first in 1975 when the UN has intervened and sought arbitration from the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The UN aimed to legally articulate which conflicting party has the right of sovereignty over the Western Saharan region. The ICJ in turn has unanimously announced and recognized the right of self-determination to the Polisario front and the Saharawis, which was politically refused by Morocco. (Omar, 2008) Moreover, the UN has intervened again but this time as a mediator to reach out a political resolution for the Western Saharan conflict. It headed and mediated the negotiations between the Polisario Front and Morocco. That it assigned the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to handle referendum procedures, and supervise the cease fire procedures, and the peace building measures. Not only that, but the UNHCR and the UN World Food program have also furnished the Polisario front with several aid programs to distribute it over the Saharawi refugees in the camps. (Seddon, 1987) Additionally, the external intervention involved other international and regional institutions like



the OAU (the Organization of African Unity) besides the UN and the ICJ. The OAU has obscured the military operations of the Moroccan state against the Polisario front by isolating it and has endorsed the right for the self determination of the Polisario Front and Sahrawis. Not only that, but the OAU pushed for the ratification of the peace treaty “The Algeris agreement “between the Polisario front and Mauretania in 1979. This has positively enhanced the political position of the Polisario front through further isolating Morocco. Moreover, it has officially legitimized the Polisario Front by adding a seat to the SDAR in the OAU. This has further pressured Morocco to announce its temporarily acceptance to the proposals of the controlled referendum. (Seddon, 1987)

Despite that these external interventions aimed to settle the conflict, neither the UN (with its different bodies), the OAU nor the ICJ acquired the enforcing mechanism over Morocco. This does not mean that their intervention did not affect the balance of power between the two conflicting parties, but it meant that they might have added to the stalemate of the conflict. This is because they were not able to compel Morocco to approve the referendum nor to allow the Polisario Front to practice its right of self-determination.

The Polisario front has also witnessed other external interventions in its favor at the beginning of its struggle. For example, it was backed militarily in its armed conflict against Morocco, primarily by Algeria. It received sundry of military aids from Algeria, and to a lesser extent from Libya as well. This is because of the political ties they established with the Polisario front against the Moroccan monarchy. Both Algeria and Libya considered the Moroccan monarchy as a geopolitical competitor in the region that follow a divergent ideology to theirs. Thus, Libya allowed for fundamental financial assistance to Polisario front and Algeria backed the Polisario front with mainly arms and weapons, and a physical base in its territory to reinforce the movement’s capabilities against Morocco. The support base of the Polisario front either politically or

diplomatically to include other regions of the world like the states of Haiti and Philippines which further push the Moroccan government to seek settlements. (Pazzanita, 1994)

On the other hand, the Moroccan government sought support to outweigh the external intervention carried out in favor of the Polisario Front. It was able to attain the backing of several permanent members in the UN security Council like the US and France. They in turn assisted the Moroccan political stance through vetoing the propositions set by the MINURSO and opposing to offer it any further authorities that can compel Morocco to abide the UN agreements. Also, France opposed the full ratification over the 2003 Baker's Peace Plan or to compel Morocco to accept the implementation of the referendum over the Western Saharan independence. Similarly, the US and the UK supported Morocco's position against the Polisario Front. They obstructed any changes to the mandate of the MINURSO, which authorize the MINUSRO to monitor and halt any human rights' violations practiced by the Moroccan government against the Polisario Front. This is especially that the disputed territory of the Western Sahara is under the UN supervision. (Zoubir, 2018) Furthermore, in 1985, the Moroccan government sought assistance from the World Bank and was provided with a short-term loan of 200 million dollars despite the Moroccan enormous economic crisis and its international debt (13 billion dollars). Likewise, the Moroccan government won the support of the IMF as well to reinforce its economic situation and was provided with a new stand-by loan of 250 million dollars. This had immensely fostered the military stance of the Moroccan government and increase its expenditure to 1 billion dollars in five years. This is despite of the 74 million dollars military assistance and the 66 million dollars development and food aid handed over by the US to Morocco to counter its conflict with the Polisario Front in 1986. (Ibid, 1987)

Moreover, the external intervention was also clear at the Moroccan state's struggle with the Polisario Front over the natural resources in Western Sahara region. Morocco, on one hand, sought to utilize these natural resources for its economic advantages and further signed several contracts with foreign companies for their extraction. The Polisario Front has rejected such contracts and claimed of their illegality. From one perspective, the UN has again supported the political stance of the Polisario Front under Secretary General for Legal Affairs and officially announced the illegality of such contracts. From another perspective, the EU has signed multiple agreements with Morocco over these natural resources that allow for fishing activities by the EU vessels in the entire coast of Morocco and in the dispute territory of Western Sahara as well. In consequence, the SADR of the Polisario front signed contracts with Australian companies for extractions as well and ratified nine other contracts with various oil companies for explorations. (Miller, 2014)

In 2000, the external intervention in favor of Morocco was reinforced. The Morocco's political and economic situation was consolidated with the EU assistance as elaborated above and with the other governments and international institutions' support as well. The EU and Morocco on one hand issued an Action Plan under the EU's Neighborhood Policy, which largely influenced their economic, political, and social alliances. The US provided an aid of about 41.2 million dollars to Morocco in 2012, because of the FTA agreement signed in 2004. Moreover, Saudi Arabia is also considered one of the important supporters to Morocco against its conflict with the Polisario Front. Although, it kept low profile towards its support to Morocco, but it constantly provided Morocco with an aid of around 200 to 500 million dollars annually. (Strachan, 2014)

Despite this enormous external intervention in favor to the Moroccan side, the cost of the armed conflict between Morocco and the Polisario Front is rather high. This left the conflict with no

decisive victory to either sides, especially that the Polisario Front was backed by several external interventions as well.

In all, the Polisario front was backed by various international institutions like the ICJ and the UN which issued various rulings and resolutions in favor of the movement since the very beginning of the struggle. This might have added much to the movement's legitimacy, credibility and to its power authorities. However, this support was outweighed by more powerful and constant support from different first world countries that obstructed any of the resolutions or the implementation of the rulings that might harm Moroccan political aims. As a result, this has all added to imbalance of the power dynamics between the Polisario Front and Morocco. Therefore, the Polisario Front like the Kurdish movement encountered an early external intervention in its favor from the ICJ, the UN and Algeria, which has triggered Morocco to seek counter external intervention from several states and international institutions as well. This in turn did not only prolong the conflict but added further complications to the conflict and resulted in its stalemate.

### ***4.3 Level of Democracy within the states***

The level of democracy and the implementation of the democratic values are one of the thesis's hypotheses. I argued that this hypothesis contributes to the causal mechanism that resulted in the divergent outcomes of the three rebel movements under study. As elaborated in Chapter 2, the literature has endorsed this hypothesis, and showed that the type of the state affects immensely the dynamics of the conflict and the outcomes of the rebel movements. This is because the level of

democracy of the state determines the state's reaction towards the rebel movement and the conflict, and also the state's reaction towards transnationalism and base of support. For instance, democratic states tend to adopt tolerant measures to deal with the rebel movements and their demands or contentious politics. Unlike the authoritarian states that tend to use coercive and violent methods. In other words, the effectiveness of the rebel movements is higher in the democratic states and usually yield the intended outcomes, unlike the authoritarian states. However, it is still crucial to articulate that there are different levels of each state type like democracy which can range from the transition phase of democratization and procedural democracy to participatory democracy.

Thus, after the brief elaboration on the third hypothesis, I will test its relevance as a causal mechanism comparatively in the following paragraphs through discussing the level of democracy in the three conflicting states under study.

#### ***4.3.1 Mexico***

The Mexican state prior to the development of the Zapatista movement, was ruled by the PRI party. The PRI party ruled Mexico for around 71 years, by which the presidential candidates were selected by the incumbent president. Not only that, but the PRI ensured a smooth hand over of the political authority through electoral frauds, when required. Moreover, the presidency overruled the judicial and legislative branches which did not allow for the separations of powers and the pursuit of checks and balances. The civil society in Mexico was also coopted into state-governed organizations and was not able to develop coherent opposition parties until almost 1978. (Gilberth & Otero, 2001) Later, the ruling party of the PRI sought democratic transition in terms of

implementing the electoral democracy and pursuing free-market and neoliberal reforms. This was first when Mexican government has enforced the agrarian counter-reform in 1991 which altered the policies set for land redistribution and allowed for privatization of the collectively owned lands. Then, when it enforced the NAFTA agreement in 1994. Accordingly, the Mexican state aimed to abide by the agreements' set of rules and aimed not lose its national and international legitimacy. It by then pursued an electoral reform that permitted the legal registration of other political parties. (Collins, 2010)

Hence, before the 1994 insurgency, the political system of Mexico exercised the electoral form of democracy or the procedural democracy. However, the loopholes of this democracy were unfolded nationally and internationally at the eruption of the Zapatista movement. This in turn has triggered the Mexican government to take further reforms. It first pushed for the resignation of the interior minister and former governor of Chiapas. It authorized another electoral reform that compelled the Mexican government to allow for international and civic observers to monitor the presidential elections. Moreover, the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) turned into an independent body that is governed by nonpartisan citizens and not by the Mexican government itself. These political reforms resulted in various outcomes. For example, the opposition was able to win the political power of the Lower House of Congress in the midterm election in 1997 midterm elections. Also, that the Mexican government assigned Manuel Camacho Solis as the peace commissioner and called for instant negotiations with the Zapatista movement within the same month of the uprising. Moreover, the Mexican government has even developed a unilateral cease-fire procedure. (Klesner,1998).

Though, these political steps undertaken by the Mexican government may fastened the democratization process of Mexico but did not fully democratize Mexico. Until before 2000, it

was still listed as a semi-democratic political system, especially with the continuity of relatively practicing electoral fraud. Also, the monopoly of executive power by the PRI for over than 70 years, accompanied by the bad record on human rights and the rule of law. The Mexican government exercised repressive measures as a form of low-intensity warfare in parallel to its peace negotiations with the Zapatista movement. (Otero ,2001) In addition to this, the Freedom house of index showed that Mexico is considered as “partly free” at the time period of 1994 till before the 2000s. It has scored ‘4’ in the political rights category and ‘4’ in the civil liberties category. (Freedom House index, 1990 &1994)<sup>4</sup>

However, the political system of Mexico has largely changed in the 2000s. This is mainly because the victory of the opposition party (PAN party) and its president Vicente Fox in the 2000 primary elections. This has pushed the Mexican state further in its democratization path of Mexico and reinforced the changes in its political system. Not only that, but Fox has pushed for setting the Zapatista’s conflict resolution as a priority in the 2001 political agenda, which accelerated granting the Zapatista movement their territorial autonomy. (ibid ,2001) The Freedom House index showed that the Mexican state was listed as “free” state in 2000 and scored ‘2’ in the political rights category and ‘3’ in the civil liberties category. (Freedom House index, 2000)

Thus, as elaborated above, at the beginning of the struggle, the Mexican state was listed as “partly free” especially after the implementation of NAFTA. This is because such agreement compelled Mexico to apply liberal economic and political policies in several aspects, and to political openings

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<sup>4</sup> The Freedom House Index applies seven points scale to each of the categories (ie, the political rights & civil liberties categories). By which, (1) is the freest and (7) is the least free. No state is considered totally free or unfree, but it can be judged that the state’s score of (1) is better or considered freer than its score of (2).

and the protection of human and civil rights. However, by 2000s, Mexico was listed as “free” state with high scores on both the political rights and civil liberties categories.

#### **4.3.2 Turkey**

The Turkish state since its establishment and till the 2000s, its political system was structured based on the hegemony of the military in politics or formatted by the National Security Council. It witnessed several military interventions in 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997 to reformulate the Turkish political system and outline its framework according to the Turkish national security. Despite that, the relationship between the Turkish state and the Kurds in Turkey did not officially exist in the agenda of the elected governments, but rather determined by the National Security Council in the 70s, 80s, and the 90 eras. Thus, the Turkish political system was dominated by the military and the practice of repression over civil authorities through multiple military coups. Turkish politics did not also enjoy the respect of general human rights, the rule of law nor even the freedom of expression. These periods of coups promoted brutal and violent repressive tactics against the Kurdish movement and the Kurds in general. In addition, at the beginning of the 2000’s, the state of emergency procedure was still enforced by the Turkish state over the high dense Kurdish cities in the east and the southeast of Turkey. The Turkish politics was featured of stressing the importance of Turkish state nationalism and in turn exercised different forms of exclusionary policies and restrictive assimilation towards the Kurds, especially after 1995. (Cakmak, 2014)

The violation of the human rights prospects against the Kurds were mainly in the 1980s after the eruption of the Kurdish movement. The Turkish state turned to “Securitization of the Kurdish



conflict”. This was even institutionalized in the 1982 constitution which officially banned the usage of any other languages than the Turkish even in education. With the escalation of the Kurdish guerrilla attacks within Turkey, the Turkish state commenced its usage of violent and repressive strategies as well. It transferred its troops in the southeast and started the recruitment of village guards to counter the PKK fighters in the region. Not only that, but the Turkish security forces have exercised several brutal strategies ranging from evacuation of villages, displacements of families, extra-judicial killings, disappearances, and torture. In 1987, the Turkish state enforced the emergency rule over ten provinces of the southeast. Moreover, the Turkish state has issued a new anti-terrorism law in 1991, which legitimized a vast array of repressive activities to combat terrorism. The Kurdish or the pro-Kurdish parties were completely embargoed. (Kaliber & Tocci, 2010) According to the Freedom House index, Turkey was listed as “not free” in 1978 and “partly free” in 1994. (Freedom House index, 1978 & 1994)

However, by the late 1990s, the Turkish state’s political approach started slightly to change, which in turn affected its relationship with the Kurdish movement and the stance of the Kurdish problem. This change was due to the European Union’s democratic conditionality for membership through the Copenhagen political criteria and because of the arrestment of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1999. Since then, and with the unilateral five years cease fire proposed by the PKK and the evolution of the KCK, the Turkish state granted some rights to the Kurds like the right to broadcast, and to accept the Kurdish language as a possible elective course in schools, abolishment of death penalties and lifting the state of emergency. (Perthes, 2010) Not only that, but Turkey aimed to democratize and apply political reform within its political system. It started with the amendments to the constitution in 2001. Further, the Turkish parliament issued eight harmonization policies between 2002 and 2004. These policies included the liberalization of political parties, press,

allowed the broadcasting and education in other languages than the Turkish, increased the civilian checks and balances over the military etc. The EU conditional approval of its candidacy fostered such changes, and the democratization process. This period especially after the 2002 elections and the AKP coming to power, allowed for Turkish liberalization and in turn for the “Kurdish opening” phase (discussed earlier). In 2005, the Prime Minister and the AKP leader Tayyip Erdogan opposed to the practiced assimilative state policies against the Kurds and the Kurdish movement and allowed for a wider political space that engaged the Kurds. Accordingly, the new Turkish political system restricted the veto power of the military and further released the Kurdish politicians captured since the 1994. According to the Human Rights Association of Turkey, the practice of violations to human rights’ figures were dwindling between 1999 and 2004, and there was a substantial increase in the human rights situation in Turkey after such political reforms. (Tezur, 2009)

According to the Freedom House index, Turkey was listed as “partly free” in the 2000s period. It scored ‘4’ in the political rights category and ‘5’ in the civil liberties category. (Freedom House index, 2000) This means that the changes discussed above in the Turkish political system, changed Turkey’s categorization from “not free” state to “a “partly free” state.

Since 2009, the internal dynamics has changed back, and forth which affected the level of democracy and rule of law in Turkey and also the relationship between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state especially in 2014. At the beginning of 2009, there were positive anticipation that the relationship between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement will be settled in a way. Especially that even though the commenced Kurdish peace process by Justice and Development Party (AKP) government -which is also known as the Kurdish opening or the resolution process- failed at the beginning but was rebooted in 2012-2013. This is because the Kurdish peace pacts

were later strongly supported by the government especially with the rising prospects of autonomous Kurdish region in the neighboring countries and the rising number of casualties as well. Not only that, but the Turkish government has also carried out many rounds of informal peace negotiations with the PKK leadership and pro-Kurdish parties like the BDP (Peace and Democracy Party). This resulted in further reforms to the peace pacts introduced earlier, ending the armed conflict, and in enforcing an indefinite cease fire resolution. In return, the Turkish state halted their operations in the Qandil Mountains in northern Iraq, and by then the anticipation of a probable settlement of the Kurdish problem in Turkey has risen. (Aydin, Keyman, & Duzgit, 2017)

However, there had been a severe drift in the political actions of the Turkish government mainly in 2014 especially with the growing strategic importance and authority of the YPG and the KRG. Turkey has been targeting the movement's bases in Iraq. Not only that, but it has suppressed violently the huge Kurdish protests within the Turkish borders that had taken place as an objection to the Turkish government's actions. This resulted to have the police, killing around 30 Kurdish citizens in the southeast provinces, Ankara, and Istanbul. Not only that, but the Turkish forces targeted the movement's members in Hakkari in 2014 As a result, the PKK carried out several revenge attacks against Turkish police officers. The relationship got more hostile in 2015 and that is mainly because of Turkey's priorities in its foreign policy (Derisotis, 2019)

Besides the resumption of the armed conflict, these political changes produced electoral tensions between the HDP and AKP. The HDP-AKP relation worsened in June 2015, when the AKP has failed for the first time to attain the majority vote since 2002 vis a vis the pro-Kurdish party HDP (the leftwing People's Democratic Party). This has led to the automatic and complete termination of the peace pact processes from the government side. Moreover, the AKP had declared that there

is not anymore, a Kurdish problem in Turkey and that the Kurds will not get any more political rights. Since then, Turkey has been witnessing a more intensified and deadly resumed armed conflict between the Turkish government and the Kurdish movement. While, the PKK has launched several attacks against Turkish soldiers and police officers, the Turkish state targeted and arrested many of HDP's members. Moreover, there have been several suicide bombings that resulted in 104 people been killed and in return several Turkish air strikes against PKK's bases. (ibid, 2019) Hence, the Turkish political system backslided and did not only terminate the peace process in 2015 but resumed the securitization practices against the Kurds similar to the period of the military coups. (Novellis ,2018)

According to the Freedom House index, Turkey's global freedom score has dwindled since 2009 from being "partly free", until it was listed as "not free" in 2020. (Freedom House index, 2014, 2017, &2020)

Therefore, as outlined above, Turkey has witnessed back and forth changes in its level of democracy. However, throughout the studied period, the level of democracy is considerably lower than that of Mexico. Unlike Mexico, Turkey was multiply listed as "not free" state either at the very beginning of the struggle or now.

### **4.3.3 Morocco**

The Moroccan state was featured to have a repressive political system that blocked any political access to many societal factions before the 1990s. However, since 1992, the Moroccan state has witnessed several institutional reforms aiming to democratize or to undergo democratic transition.

This was mainly because it aimed to join the third wave of democratization. However, this democratization prospects were consolidated in 1997 when the opposition socialist was ruling. Since then, the government declared a political opening through decentralizing the power from the central government, enlarging the political space, increasing the political participation, and issuing new constitution that protects the human and civil rights. It has also overthrown the national information system and issued liberalizing press laws. Morocco was categorized as the most democratic state in the Arab world especially after 1999 or at the post king Hassan II rule period. (Ibahrine, 2002)

However, the Moroccan democratic transition faced mighty hurdles in terms of the limited constraints on the socialist-led government and the resilience of the authoritarian cultural and institutional frameworks. This transition may have allowed to push for exercising more civil and political rights, but the Moroccan state was still able to dominate the government. For example, the King was still able to appoint his loyalists in the government. In all, the power structure that was developed before the 1990s, was resilient enough to continue at the democratic transition phase. Moreover, the political system in Morocco was still ruled by a constitutional monarchy who was able to dominate the political authority over the three branches of the government, the legislative, executive, and judicial. Not only that, but the political system was still based on the three principles, Islam, the Monarchy, and the territorial unity (and that include the Western Saharan). Any deviations from these principles from a political party or group will result in its banning from the political sphere. Hence, the monarch's authority is supreme and is based on his religious role as the "Commander of the Faithful" and the head of the state. (Abdel-Samad, 2014)

Moreover, this political openness in both the press freedom and the human rights were outweighed with the use of legal and financial sanctions over criticisms to maintain order and legitimacy. The

granted freedoms and political opening in Morocco might be a precedent compared to the Arab states in the region but was constrained through different measures. For example, in 2011 and the rage of the Arab revolts, the Moroccan state controlled its influence over the country through the usage of “technologies of disconnection” to restrict the transfer of information and the cyber space. Not only that, but it also blocked the websites and cyber attacked sites. These tactics were also used against the Polisario Front to limit their reach out or transnational influence. The Moroccan state has traced and targeted the members of Polisario front. Thus, the Moroccan state may have encountered political and constitutional reforms throughout the history, but the with no effect or restrictions over the monarch’s power, and with no real public space for the citizens away from the government dominance. (Zaid, 2016) Accordingly, the Freedom House index scores showed limited changes in the global freedom scores of Morocco before and after the implementation of the democratization process. Morocco was still listed as “Partly Free” and scored ‘5’ and ‘4’ in the political rights and civil liberties categories, respectively. (Freedom House index, 1994 & 2000-2001).

The Moroccan state has developed further constitution reforms in 2011 which illustrates that Morocco’s system of governance will follow a constitutional, democratic, parliamentary, and social monarchy framework. It articulates the existence of separation of powers and the citizenry participation in the political sphere to foster accountability measures. However, this does not entail any restrictions or limitation to the monarch authority like the British or the Spanish states. The monarch is still authorized to appoint the government members, the Prime minister of the winning party and to dissolve the parliament, etc. Accordingly, the Worldwide Governance indicator developed by the World Bank Group outlined the achievement of the state in terms of freedom of expression, political stability, absence of violence and the protection of rights, etc. Morocco has

scored the lowest at the accountability, absence of violence and political stability. This ensures the fact that the constitutional and institutional reforms undertaken by the Moroccan government did not yield a fundamental push for the democratic transition process. Similarly, the Arab Democracy Index that measures the process of democratic transition in the Arab countries pointed out that in comparison between the institutional reforms and political practice, Morocco did not achieve any improvements in its democratic transition phase since its start in 1999. (Benhlal, 2014) In addition to this, the Freedom House index showed that Morocco was also listed as “Partly free” and has also scored ‘5’ and ‘4’ in the political rights and civil liberties categories, in 2014, 2015, and 2017. Thus, in all, the Moroccan state did not perform real reforms away from the expansion of powers to the Prime Minister and to the Parliament when issuing legislative initiatives. This means that there was no drastic change in the political system or the level of democracy since the 1999 till today. Morocco might not get listed as “not free” like Turkey but was categorized as “partly free” throughout the period under study.

#### ***4.4 Discussion & Concluding remarks***

The above examination of the three variables among the three rebel movements showed that the proposed interactive model and the variables are of relevance. Not only that, but that the level of democracy in particular might be an antecedent variable to the other two variables. The Zapatista movement was the only rebel movement among the three cases studied that could attain territorial autonomy. The causal mechanism for this could be explained through my interactive model which suggests that the three variables - transnationalism and popular support, external intervention, and level of democracy within the state- should exist and interact in a particular configuration and sequence with the level of democracy being an antecedent variable, to attain the intended outcome.

The Zapatista case showed that the level of democracy seems to be not only an antecedent variable but might be more significant than the other two variables. This is because the level of democracy determined the state's reaction towards the rebel movement and towards its strategies to seek transnationalism and popular support. For example, the Mexican state at the early stages of the struggle with the Zapatista movement -as discussed in Chapter 3- relied on coercive methods only.

However, this reaction has changed only after 12 days of the armed conflict, by which the Mexican government sought a unilateral cease fire procedure and agreed to negotiate. Further, these negotiations resulted in formulating the San Andreas Peace Accords which include the movement's demands of territorial autonomy (Ronfeldt et al., 1998) Thus, the change of the state's reaction and the short duration of using violence can be explained through its level of democracy. This is mainly because at that time the Mexican state was "Partly free" and became sensitive to human rights records and individual rights like freedom of expression since the implementation of



NAFTA agreement. In other words, this agreement compelled Mexico to apply liberal economic and political policies in several aspects, pursue political openings and guarantee the protection of human and civil rights.

However, this change in the state's reaction did not result in granting the Zapatista movement territorial autonomy yet until only in 2001. This is because the level of democracy at the period prior to 2001 (1994-2000) has only forced the Mexican state to halt its usage of violence but was not high enough to force the state to implement the San Andreas peace accords. These accords were only implemented in 2001, when the level of democracy got high and the Mexican state was listed as a "free state". The Freedom House index showed that the Mexican state was listed as "free" state in 2000 and scored '2' in the political rights category and '3' in the civil liberties category. Therefore, political system of Mexico has largely changed after the victory of the opposition party (PAN party) and its president Vicente Fox in the 2000 primary elections. This has pushed the Mexican state further in its democratization path and reinforced the changes in its political system. Not only that, but Fox has pushed for setting the Zapatista's conflict resolution as a priority in the 2001 political agenda, which accelerated granting the Zapatista movement their territorial autonomy. (Otero ,2001).

Thus, the high level of democracy in the 2000s allowed for several political opportunities utilized by the Zapatista movement in its favor. This is because that the Mexican state became sensitive to the international community which enhanced the Zapatista movement's political stance and allowed for exerting much pressure over the Mexican government to attain its goals. In other words, the high level of democracy within the Mexican state created political opportunities for the Zapatista movement to pursue its territorial autonomy and restricted the Mexican government from override or completely repress the Zapatista movement.

The level of democracy has also affected the state's reaction towards the movement's strategies. The Mexican relatively high level of democracy allowed the Zapatista movement to construct the strong and necessary transnational networks and popular support since the very beginning of its eruption. This might have not been accomplished if the Mexican government was at a lower level of democracy. The Zapatista movement -unlike the other two movements- have not encountered any bans or restrictions to the usage of media, or the internet to display their opinions and views. Therefore, the two variables of level of democracy and transnationalism and popular support interact together with the level of democracy being an antecedent variable.

However, a high level of democracy in itself might not result in attaining territorial autonomy. This is because the Zapatista movement's success should also be accounted -as discussed earlier- to its ability to enlarge its transnational networks and widen its popular support either nationally or internationally. Not only that, it did not also witness any early external interventions neither in favor of the movement itself nor the state. Thus, these two variables interact together as well. That because there were not any early external interventions to any of the conflicting parties, the only effect over the existent balance of power was the influence of the transnational networks and the popular support in favor of the Zapatista movement.

Thus, the Zapatista case shows that my interactive model could account for the causal mechanism of my research question. It demonstrated that the level of democracy might be an antecedent variable and of more significance but cannot alone result in the intended goals. This means that the non-existence of any early external intervention accompanied by strong and coherent transnational networks and popular support in a high-level democratic state can result in a rebel movement attaining territorial autonomy.

Likewise, both the Kurdish and Polisario Front can assure such claims. On one hand, Turkey has witnessed low level of democracy compared to Mexico. It was either listed as “Partly free” or a “not free” state throughout the period under study. This has negatively affected the state’s reaction towards the Kurdish movement, and towards the movement’s strategies as well. Not only that, but the Kurdish movement -as discussed earlier in the chapter- was not able to establish a fast and wide-scope transnational networks and popular support neither at the beginning or throughout the struggle. Further, it could not effectively display itself in the media nor to link its goals and concerns to other movements and organizations elsewhere. Moreover, it encountered early external interventions which has not only prolonged the armed struggle but triggered the Turkish state to seek a counter- intervention. This has in turn did not only resulted in the conflict’s stalemate, without a decisive victory to any of the conflicting parties, but also in the resumption of the armed conflict.

The Polisario Front similarly did not have high level of democracy throughout the period under study and got listed as “Partly free” with very low scores of political rights and civil liberties. Not only that, but it could not also establish strong transnational networks and popular support and has experienced early external intervention in favor of the rebel movement. This intervention -like the Kurdish case-triggered the Moroccan government to seek a counter intervention which resulted in the stalemate of the conflict.

Therefore, based on the analysis displayed in Chapter 4. I propose that the three rebel movements showed that the level of democracy might be an antecedent variable which influences first the state’s reaction towards the rebel movement’s eruption and later to the movement’s transnational networks and popular support. This does not mean that it is a sufficient variable but rather a

necessary one. Not only that, but that transnationalism and popular support is also a necessary variable that affects the balance of power in favor of the rebel movement, if there are not any early external interventions. This is because the external intervention influences the dynamics of the conflict through triggering counter intervention and by then the level of resolve. It prolongs the armed conflict and reduce the probability of making concessions by any of the conflicting parties. In other words, external intervention negatively affects the prospects of the rebel movement either through prolonging the conflict or through freezing it, and according to my measure of success, which is territorial autonomy, this is considered a failure.

Therefore, the three variables are not considered sufficient ones, but rather necessary ones that interact to yield the intended outcomes. In other words, the causal mechanism cannot be explained in 3x3 table, because the three variables should exist together in the particular sequence and configuration discussed above. It is also important to outline that besides that the level of democracy might be an antecedent variable, it seems to be endogenous to the whole process. It did not only affect the outcomes of the movements but got affected by the movements as well. For instance, while the Zapatista movement fostered the Mexican democratization process, the Kurdish movement resulted in the backsliding of democracy over time in Turkey. In all, the three case studies endorsed my proposition that the causal mechanism to my research question is explained through an interactive model of three variables that exist and interact in a particular configuration and sequence.

## ***Chapter V. Conclusion***

The thesis's main aim was to answer the puzzle of why despite that the territorial autonomy is largely discussed in the literature as an effective conflict management mechanism for various ethnopolitical wars is attained by some rebel movements and not others. Therefore, this thesis sought to answer the question of why some rebel movements attain territorial autonomy while others do not? I hypothesized that there are three factors that might affect the dynamics of the rebel movements and explain this research question. These are the extent of transnationalism and popular support of the movement, external intervention, and the level of democracy within the state.

I further assumed that the interaction of the three variables in a particular configuration and sequence can explain the divergent outcomes. In other words, I propose that it is crucial to go beyond the existing literature that explain the outcomes of the rebel movements through one or more variables and use an interactive model to seek an accurate causal mechanism. This is because when I referred to the literature that examined my research question, I found that the displayed main theoretical approaches (the political opportunity structure approach and the type of the existent political system, the resource mobilization approach, and the strategies used) fell short to demonstrate the divergent outcomes of the cases studies. On one hand, the three rebel movements have utilized violent and non-violent strategies at least at one phase of their struggle. Also, the Zapatista movement acquired the least resources either financially or militarily compared to the other two movements but was the only one that could attain territorial autonomy (not as suggested

by the resource mobilization approach). Not only that, but the three states were at the democratization phase and they all suppressed the rebel movements at least at one stage of the conflict. Thus, I hypothesized that the thesis's interactive model will reinforce the assumption that the three variables may not solely have a direct impact for yielding the outcomes, but that the rebel movements are influenced by them all. In other words, my model suggested that it is not about an existing or non-existing variable, but rather a configuration of three variables that exist in a particular sequence that yielded such divergent outcomes in the cases under discussion.

These assumptions were tested and examined through three case studies which are the Zapatista movement in Mexico, the Kurdish movement in Turkey and the Polisario Front in Morocco. This is because While territorial autonomy was relatively attained by the Zapatista movement, the Kurdish movement has been listed as a terrorist organization and the Polisario Front is outlawed in Morocco. I referred to the crucial historical events in each rebel movement to articulate the common stations and points of comparison and present evidence on the three movements from the existing secondary literature using "Process tracing method. This has helped me to point out that the Zapatista movement was able to attain territorial autonomy -my measure of success-, while the other two movements did not. Not only that, but the Zapatista movement was the shortest in duration and has only engaged in an armed conflict for 12 days, compared to the other two movements. Moreover, the role of the external intervention was limited to the transnational networks of the Zapatista movement and did not involve wide array of foreign actors like the other two movements. Furthermore, the states' reaction towards the three rebel movements were very variant, despite that the three states have repressed and used violent strategies at least at one phase of the struggle.

The process tracing and the brief analysis helped in conducting my in-depth analysis in Chapter 4. This in-depth analysis showed that my interactive model and the variables are of relevance. Not only that, but it pointed out through the Zapatista case that the level of democracy seems to be not only an antecedent variable but might be more significant than the other two variables. This is because the level of democracy influenced first the state's reaction towards the rebel movement's eruption and later to the movement's transnational networks and popular support. This does not mean that it is a sufficient variable but rather a necessary one and of higher significance to the other two variables. Moreover, it demonstrated that transnationalism and popular support is also a necessary variable that affects the balance of power in favor of the rebel movement, if there are not any early external interventions. This is because the external intervention influences the dynamics of the conflict through triggering counter intervention and by then the level of resolve. It prolongs the armed conflict and reduce the probability of making concessions by any of the conflicting parties. In other words, external intervention negatively affects the prospects of the rebel movement either through prolonging the conflict or through freezing it, and according to my measure of success, which is territorial autonomy, this is considered a failure.

Therefore, the three variables are not considered sufficient ones, but rather necessary ones that interact to yield the intended outcomes. In other words, the causal mechanism cannot be explained in 3x3 table, because the three variables should exist together in the particular sequence and configuration discussed above. It is also important to outline that besides that the level of democracy might be an antecedent variable, it seems to be endogenous to the whole process. It did not only affect the outcomes of the movements but got affected by the movements as well. In short, the three case studies endorsed my proposition that the causal mechanism to my research question

is explained through an interactive model of three variables that exist and interact in a particular configuration and sequence.

In all, I think that the thesis's main contribution is to show that the causal mechanism to explain the research question should transcend the narrow-scoped theoretical approaches existing in the literature. It is not about the existing of variables but the configuration and sequence of such variables. The case studies did not only endorse such assumption and my theoretical interactive model, but they also demonstrated that the level of democracy within the state might be an antecedent and a more significant variable than the others. This may need to be further studied and examined yet the thesis should be considered as a hypothesis-generating research. Thus, the thesis showed that displaying the variables in the 3x3 table might act as a limitation to accurately explain the causal mechanism.

This thesis has also highlighted that the democracy variable might not only affect the outcomes of the rebel movements but be antecedent to the other two variable and an endogenous to the whole process. Moreover, the cases showed that the relationship of political violence and democratization was not crucial to affect the dynamics of the conflicts. However, this might need further research, usage of other methodological tools and engagement of more cases to prove this proposition's relevance.



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