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Threats and Partial Concessions in the Exhaustion
of the Zapatista Wave of Protest, 1994-2003

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Abstract

Using Poisson regression models, I analyze the effects of repressive threats and procedural concessions on Zapatista protests from 1994 to 2003. Some of the results appear consistent with previous findings in the literature in that repression had a negative short-term and a positive long-term effect on protest activity and its diffusion. When concessions were used alone, the effects on protests and protests' diffusion were first negative and positive as time passed. However, when concessions and repressive threats were combined, they first had a positive and then a negative effect on protests and their diffusion. Finally, democratization changes decreased Zapatista protests in the long-term and helped to focus mobilization efforts on the remaining closed environments. Thus, contrarily to what the literature predicts, democratization openings and an inconsistent use of repression and concessions did not strengthen the development of the movement. They contributed to the movement's relative weakness over time.

Resumen

Mediante un modelo Poisson de regresión analizo los efectos de amenazas represivas y concesiones parciales en el desarrollo de protestas zapatistas desde 1994 a 2003. Algunos de los resultados de este estudio son consistentes con la literatura existente ya que este estudio confirma que actos represivos tienen un efecto negativo inicial pero un efecto positivo de largo plazo sobre actos de protesta futuros y su dispersión hacia otras ciudades. Así mismo también se encontró que cuando el Estado responde a las protestas con concesiones, éstas tienen un efecto negativo inicial, pero un efecto positivo en el largo plazo sobre protestas y su dispersión. Sin embargo, cuando el Estado reacciona a las protestas con una combinación de concesiones parciales y amenazas represivas, los efectos de éstas sobre futuros actos de protesta son inicialmente positivos y negativos en el largo plazo. Finalmente, aperturas democráticas tienen un efecto negativo en el desarrollo de futuras protestas en el largo plazo y concentran la actividad de protesta en sistemas políticos que permanecen cerrados. Por lo tanto, contrariamente a lo que la literatura predice, este estudio muestra que hay ocasiones en las que los cambios democratizadores y el uso inconsistente de la represión y las concesiones como controles de la movilización social no fortalecen el desarrollo de movimientos sociales, sino que contribuyen a su decaimiento en el largo plazo.

Introduction

Denunciations of excessive repression against the Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) and the indigenous populations in Chiapas by the Mexican federal army appeared right after the Zapatista uprising on January 1, 1994. The images of war that circulated on national and international media generated massive outrage to the governmental response against a poorly-armed indigenous guerrilla fighting for basic rights. It was clear from these images that the Mexican army could easily suppress the Zapatista rebellion. These denunciations however, helped to stop open confrontations between the army and the guerrillas twelve days after the uprising. The Mexican government declared a unilateral cease of fire on January 12, 1994 to which both parts have adhered ever since. Most importantly, denunciations of this massive repression forced the Mexican government to start dialoguing with the rebel group while keeping a military siege around Zapatista headquarters in the Lacandon Jungle. The Zapatistas and the Mexican government engaged then in a cycle of protests, partial concessions, and repressive threats. This cycle lasted until 2001 when the Indigenous Rights Bill became law, but the Zapatistas considered it only a diluted version of the San Andrés Accords signed by both sides in 1996. This last fiasco, made the Zapatistas felt that they had been betrayed by the Mexican government yet one more time and therefore in 2003, they started constructing their autonomous authorities, the Good Government Councils (Juntas de buen gobierno), parallel to those of the state and talks with the government never resumed.

The analysis of this cycle of protests, concessions and repressive threats is the purpose of this study. Using a Poisson regression analysis, this study helps to understand how concessions and repressive threats stimulated and hindered the development of further protest activity of one of the most influential recent social movements in Mexico and how the interaction of partial concessions and repressive threats lead to the current situation: a stop in protest activity, a total break-down of negotiations between both sides and the construction of autonomous parallel government structures in the Zapatista region of influence. This analysis is compared to the effects of democratization openings that occurred during the same time frame as controls. These openings allowed other parties to gain power at the local and state level *vis-à-vis* the previous dominance of the official party, Revolutionary Institutional Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI) and made elections more competitive.

1. Protests, repression and concessions

The literature on repression and concessions suggests that when the state combines repression, or the threat of its use, with concessions in an inconsistent fashion, social movements get stronger and some of them may succeed in achieving their goals (Almeida, 2003; Lichbach, 1987; Khawaja, 1993; Francisco, 1996; Rasler, 1996; Goldstone and Tilly, 2001).

In 1996, Karen Rasler tested the short and long effects of repression, high and low repression, concessions, protest diffusion and past levels of protest on current protest activities. She found support for Karl Dieter Opp and Wolfgang Roehl's (1990) argument about repression having both a negative short term effect and a positive long term effect on protest activity. She also found that concessions and spatial diffusion had a positive effect on future protest activity and that an inconsistent use of concessions and repression leads to further protest activity, as Mark Lichbach (1987) had suggested. Her arguments were: repression will initially decrease protest activity, but after a 'mourning'¹ period, protest activity will increase. Protest repression increases protest activity indirectly by increasing the diffusion of protest activity to other cities. If protests increase after the initial repressive episodes, then the state might react by making concessions to the movement as well as continuing repressing it. This inconsistent use of concessions and repression triggers further protest activity. However, concessions alone are expected to generate further protest events and their diffusion as well. Finally, past levels of protests should generate both future protest activity and diffuse protests to other places in a 'bandwagon fashion', and protest diffusion should have a positive effect on future protest activity as well.

In 2001, Jack Goldstone and Charles Tilly identified that the different effects of repression on protest activity depends on the type of scenario in which protest activity occurs: (1) mounting protests followed by severe repression will successfully inhibit further protest activity (2) mounting protests, followed by light repression leads to greater protests that are finally damped down with much greater repression, (3) mounting protests, followed by light repression, leads to greater protests, further repression and/or concessions, greater protests and so forth, (4) a spiral of protest and repression, which ends in massive concessions and (5) protests leading to concessions. Thus, Rasler's findings are characteristic of the third scenario: "the classic 'spiral' of revolutionary conflict" (Goldstone and Tilly, 2001: 190). For them, an inconsistent use of repression, especially repressive threats, and concessions is typical of authoritarian regimes which although rely more on repressing opposition, they recur to concessions when the costs

¹ In her study this period refers to the 40-day interval of private mourning and a public memorial observance after someone's death followed by Muslim communities (Rasler, 1996: 137).

of repression are too high for them to bear (Dahl, 1971). On the other hand, protests followed by concessions are more likely to occur in well established democratic scenarios where the use of repression is highly discredited, and the concessions given to the movement helped to decrease protest activity.

The Zapatista uprising occurred within a still authoritarian state, while the movement developed within Mexico's democratic transition. Thus, the interaction between the state and the insurgents followed the inconsistent pattern of partial or procedural concessions and repression and/or repressive threats characteristic of an authoritarian regime in transition. However, the ending of this interaction does not fit any of the scenarios listed by Goldstone and Tilly (2001). Zapatista protests ended in 2003² not because the movement had given away massive concessions, neither did they end because the Zapatistas were severely repressed. Zapatista protest activity came to an end without achieving significant concessions and after a reduction of the military presence in the region. This outcome deserves attention. The description of the following hypotheses and their application to the study of the Zapatista wave of protest will help to understand why this was so.

1.1. Effects of repression on protest activity and protest diffusion

According to the literature, repression, or the threat of its use, inhibits protest activity initially, but after a mourning period has passed, protest activity is expected to increase precisely to denounce past repressive measures (Opp and Roehl, 1990; Rasler, 1996). This mourning period tends to be longer when drastic repressive measures produce arrests, protesters' injuries, or the potential death of protesters and/or bystanders. However, when repression is composed mostly by repressive threats the mourning period tends to be shorter, and therefore, repression threats have similar effects as those of low or medium levels of repression (Khawaja, 1993; Tilly, 1978). Increases in the state's capacity to repress, increases the repressive threats and the costs of mobilization and therefore, even if the mourning period is shorter after the use of threats, a relapse period in protests after the repressive increase should be observable. In any case, once protestors realize that these repressive threats do not terminate in massive repressive actions protest activity will resume or become stronger.

In the case of the Zapatista movement, the state responded mainly with increases in repressive threats, as it raised its capacity to repress the movement by increasing the number of troops positioned around the region of

² As it is described later in this work, the Zapatista protest activity had a significant fall after the Acteal massacre on December 22, 1997. Nevertheless, protests continued lower but steady until August 2003 when the Zapatistas launched their new autonomous authorities.

conflict.³ A raising military presence should have intimidated Zapatistas at first as their mobilization costs were raised (Almeida, 2003; Jenkins and Perrow, 1977; Olson, 1965; Tilly, 1978), but after a while it would have generated protest activity precisely against the military siege around Zapatista communities. Even more so, as Zapatistas realized that the army was not directed to repress protest activity, protesters would have felt more confident to take their struggle back to the streets. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

HYPOTHESIS 1: Government repression had a short-term negative effect but a long-term positive on Zapatista protest activity.

Because repressive threats have an initial negative effect on protest activity in those places in which repression increased, it is expected that protests would be diffused to localities where the risk of repression is lower (Rasler 1996). Following this rationale, the following hypothesis is offered:

HYPOTHESIS 2: The effect of repression on protest diffusion was positive both in the short and long-terms.

1.2. Effects of concessions on protest activity and protest diffusion

When dissident actions successfully trigger concessions, protesters are more encouraged to continue protesting (Klandermans, 1984; Rasler, 1996), especially when these concessions are partial or procedural but not substantive. The reasons for this effect are twofold. First, partial or incomplete concessions are expected to leave dissident groups unsatisfied, therefore more willing to continue protesting. In addition, having achieved these partial concessions shows protesters that their actions had a relative positive consequence, thus they would feel motivated to protest again to gain further concessions.

Negotiations between the Mexican federal government and the EZLN lead to partial concessions only. These included the reshuffling of cabinet members, governors and state officials, or the setting of the procedures in which negotiations between both parts were to take place. To exemplify this argument the following hypothesis is presented:

HYPOTHESIS 3: Procedural concessions had positive short and long-term effects on protest activity and its diffusion.

³ There were of course some significant repressive events, such as the dismantling of the Zapatista headquarters 1996 and the massacre in Acteal in December of 1997. However, the state did not usually respond with repressive actions, but with repressive threats or by increasing its repressive capacity.

1.3. Combined effects of repression and concessions on protest activity and protest diffusion

In 1987, Mark Lichbach proposed that we cannot analyze the study of repression on protest activity without simultaneously looking at the effect of concessions, as repression and concessions are never utilized separately from one another. He argues that the simultaneous use of concessions and repression increases dissent and therefore, protest activity. Concessions encourage further contentious activities and repression heightens frustration against the state, which triggers protesters back to the streets again. Thus, if the state is to use repression or concessions to placate dissent, it must do it consistently, but it rarely does as the studies of Paul Almeida (2003), Charles Brockett (2005), Doug McAdam (1988), and Karen Rasler (1996) show. The following hypothesis summarizes this argument:

HYPOTHESIS 4: *The combined use of repression and concessions had positive short and long-term effects on both protest activity and its diffusion.*

2. Democratic openings as political opportunities

The literatures on democratization and political opportunities suggest that a democratic transition opens opportunities for dissident and previously neglected actors and sectors to mobilize and express their opinions. This previous neglect and the democratic openings trigger increases in mobilization activity, protests included (Almeida, 2007; Foweraker and Craig, 1990; O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). In the case of Mexico, more transparent and competitive elections started to appear after the electoral reforms in the early 1990s. This should have triggered mobilization further, especially around electoral times, with hopes that more protest activity would force institutional channels to open once the new political elites take power.

Although a change in rule would not have necessarily implied an opening in the political system, because the EZLN uprising was precisely against PRI rule, it is considered that a change in rule was a sign of a more open political system. Therefore, it is expected that the new parties in rule, which had also been either neglected or repressed before the transition, were now sensitized to the social demands of others sectors of the population, the Zapatistas in this case.

However the theory also suggests that if these newly empowered political elites prove incapable to respond to social demands, they become targets of further mobilization activity of groups trying to influence the decision making process (Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Katzenstein and Mueller, 1987; Kriesi *et al.*, 1995). This was the case of the newly elected leftist authorities in the 1990s. Although the EZLN never considered the Party of the Democratic

Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Democrática, PRD) as a political ally, it represented an attractive political option for many Zapatista sympathizers. Once it was in office, PRD governments proved incapable or unwilling, according to the Zapatistas, to respond to new social demands. Thus, they soon became protestors' targets. Therefore, the effects of democratic openings on protest activity and its diffusion should be perceived both in the short and long-terms. And in both cases, these effects should be positive. The following hypothesis reflects this idea:

HYPOTHESIS 5: Democratic openings, such as electoral competitiveness and changes in rule, had positive short and long term effects on both protest activity and its diffusion.

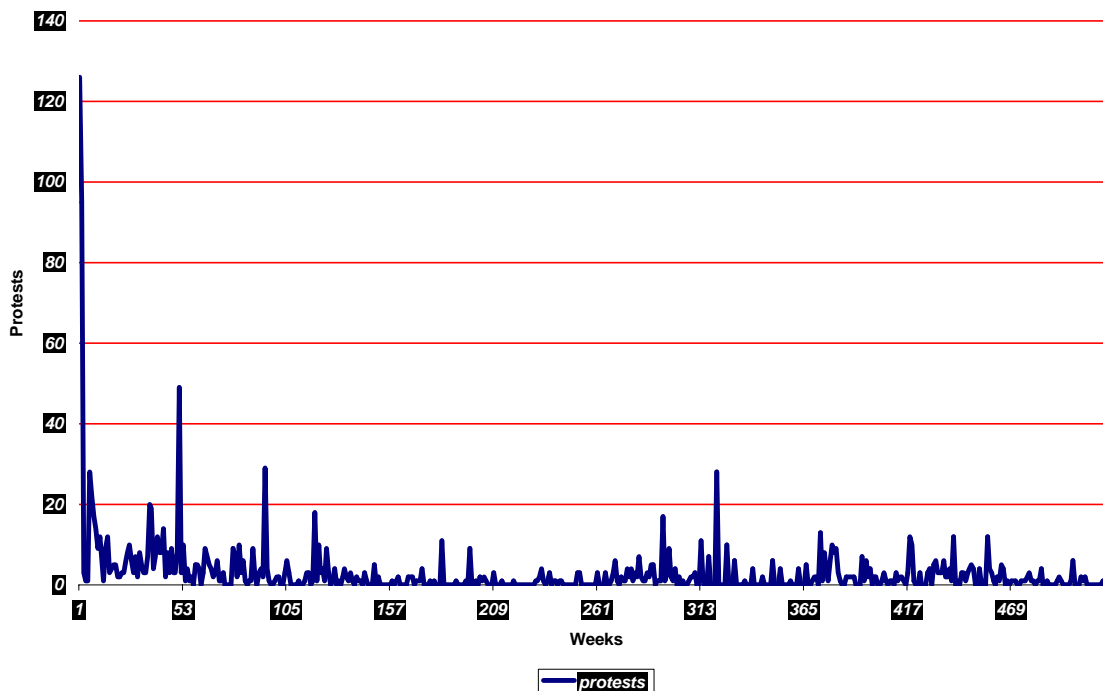
3. Repression, concessions and the zapatista wave of protest

In 1994, the Zapatista uprising, the counterattacks, the massive demonstrations in support of the Zapatistas, the ceasefire, and the initial dialogue between the government and the EZLN gave birth to the public face of the Zapatista movement, which had been organizing clandestinely for over a decade. Pro-Zapatista protest activity in Chiapas began with great national and international attention, motivated mostly by subcomandante Marcos' communiqués which also attracted national and international support for the Zapatista cause. Protests were conducted mainly by sympathizing groups and organizations as well as by the so-called Zapatista base communities.⁴ National and international observers and activists soon arrived at the region of conflict and although the numbers have never been reported, it has always been accepted that significant amounts of economic resources started flowing into the region through the many non-governmental organizations that were already there or came to the rescue of the localities in conflict.⁵ Thus, in terms of resistance, support, and attention, the Zapatistas were running strong and so did their protest activity (see Figure 1).

⁴ The EZLN leadership and militias could not have taken part in those demonstrations given the arrest warrants issued against them after the uprising. For the purpose of this study, only protesting Zapatista sympathizing organizations and groups were considered.

⁵ Author's interviews with members of the Centro de Capacitación para el Autodesarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, Enlace Civil, Coordinación Regional de la Resistencia Civil de la Sociedad Civil de Los Altos de Chiapas, and Servicios Internacionales para la Paz (SIPAZ), San Cristóbal de Las Casas, February-April 2003.

FIGURE 1. PROTESTS PER WEEK, 1994-2003



Protests continued for the next nine years as the demands for the recognition of indigenous rights and political autonomy remained unattended despite periods of negotiations and democratic openings at the local and national levels.⁶ The presence of the military in the region increased steadily over the next seven years. This had the intention of constraining the expansion of the EZLN's influence in the state, but not policing or repressing protest activity. Thus, protests continued, mostly because protests were conducted by groups sympathizing with the Zapatista cause or by supporting communities, but not by the Zapatista military leadership against which arrest warrants were issued and a military siege was raised around their headquarters in the Lacandona Jungle.

The first round of talks, the Cathedral Dialogues,⁷ took place from February 21 to March 2, 1994. Its main achievement was the recognition of two Zapatista controlled areas (*zonas francas*): one in San Miguel, Ocosingo, and another in Guadalupe Tepeyac, Las Margaritas. This initial concession was intended to stop the large scale of land invasions that took place right after

⁶ Inclán (2008) showed that the very different protest events that composed the Zapatista cycle of protests endured the same effects from political opportunity factors. This might be due to the fact that very few Zapatista protests turned to be violent.

⁷ The talks were named after the place in which they took place, the cathedral of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas.

the uprising. Land invasions receded and in May of that same year the negotiating parts met again to arrange the implementation of the first negotiated points. However, negotiations broke down again. For the Zapatistas, these fell short of responding to the causes that had led to the uprising.⁸

On December 19th, 1994, the EZLN launched the peaceful occupation of 38 of the then-111 municipalities in Chiapas and declared them rebel territory.⁹ In February 1995, the Mexican government responded by issuing arrest warrants against the main Zapatista commanders whose identities had been recognized and sending the army to the recently declared *municipios rebeldes* to re-establish the constitutional order. The headquarters of Guadalupe Tepeyac were destroyed and the EZLN was forced to retrieve deeper into the Lacandon Jungle. From all the 38 taken municipalities, the EZLN was able to keep only one, San Andrés Larráinzar, renamed by the Zapatistas as San Andrés Sakamch'en de los Pobres. Only smaller communities within the taken municipalities remained as Zapatista support bases.¹⁰ The army had no problem recovering the seized municipal buildings. By the time the army arrived, however, the EZLN forces had left and no one was captured.

In March, President Zedillo signed the Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation and Just Peace in Chiapas (Ley para el diálogo, la reconciliación y la paz justa en Chiapas), which guaranteed the suspension of military operations and the arrest warrants against EZLN leaders as long as the dialogue between the parts continued. Soon thereafter a delegation of the EZLN met with representatives of the government, the Commission of Concord and Pacification (Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación, COCOPA),¹¹ and the National Commission of Intermediation (Comisión Nacional de Intermediación, CONAI)¹² in San Miguel, Ocosingo, to discuss the logistics and the agenda for the upcoming peace talks.¹³

On April 22, 1995, the San Andrés Dialogues began in San Andrés Larráinzar. The talks were again a major mobilizing event as the EZLN invited a large group of advisors to take part in the different negotiating tables and indigenous communities were mobilized as security shields. Meetings and

⁸ Eisenstadt (2008) shows how land concessions were granted to some Zapatista communities. Nevertheless the Zapatistas continued protesting under the indigenous rights and autonomy claims which remained unattended.

⁹ Affected localities: Altamirano, Amatenango del Valle, Bochil, El Bosque, Cancuc, Chamula, Chanal, Chenalhó, Chilón, Comitán, Huitiupán, Huixtán, La Independencia, Ixtapa, Jitotol, Larráinzar, Las Margaritas, Mitontic, Nicolás Ruiz, Ocosingo, Oxchuc, Palenque Pantelhó, Las Rosas, Sabanilla, Salto de Agua, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Simojovel, Sitalá, Socoltenango, Teopisca, Tila, Totolapa, La Trinitaria, Tumbalá, Venustiano Carranza, Yajalón and Zinacantán.

¹⁰ Twenty-nine towns and communities in Lacandon Jungle and the highlands are still under the rule of the Zapatista Juntas de buen gobierno (Enlace Civil, 2007).

¹¹ The COCOPA was formed by legislators from all parties in Congress to give it independence from the executive power.

¹² The CONAI was formed by members of civic organizations and the Bishop of San Cristóbal de Las Casas as mediator.

¹³ This period was then called the Dialogues of San Miguel.

marches surrounded these events. In September 1995, the parts agreed upon six different topics that needed to be addressed in different rounds of negotiations: (1) indigenous rights and culture, (2) democracy and justice, (3) wealth and development, (4) reconciliation in Chiapas, (5) women's rights in Chiapas, and (6) the cease of hostilities.

In December 1995, the Zapatistas inaugurated five regional capitals that became known as Aguascalientes¹⁴ in the communities of La Realidad (Las Margaritas),¹⁵ La Garrucha (Ocosingo), Oventic (San Andrés Larrainzar), Roberto Barrios (Palenque) and Morelia (Altamirano). The government responded by intensifying the military presence in the region, while the COCOPA and the EZLN formulated the procedures and terms for a Special Forum on Indigenous Rights to be held in San Cristóbal de Las Casas in January 1996.

In February, the EZLN met again with the governmental delegation and signed the first set of accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture, the San Andrés Accords. In March, the rounds of talks on 'Democracy and Justice' were supposed to start. The EZLN tried to use this second round of talks to broaden the scope of their demands to the national level, but the government aimed to keep these issues at the local and state levels only.¹⁶ The clear difference between the two perspectives soon brought negotiations to a gridlock, and finally to an impasse when the federal government refused to recognize the San Andrés Accords in September of that year. The government's decision not to honor the accords ended all negotiating talks and made its recognition the emblematic demand of all subsequent demonstrations in support of the Zapatista movement.

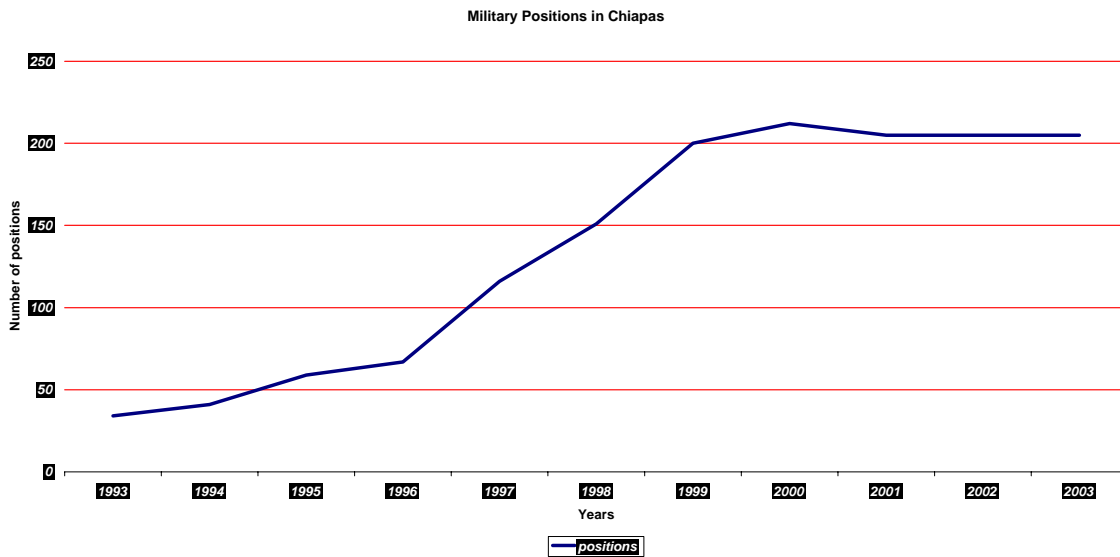
While the federal government was granting procedural concessions to ease the pressure of the movement's demands, military positions in the region had been steadily increasing to control the spread of the EZLN influence (see Figure 2).

¹⁴ The name of Aguascalientes was given to honor the revolutionary convention held by Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa in 1914 in the city of Aguascalientes where the revolutionary leaders agreed to ally.

¹⁵ La Realidad became the new headquarters of the EZLN after Guadalupe Tepeyac was destroyed in February 1995.

¹⁶ Author's interview with Marco Antonio Bernal, the government's peace negotiator at the time the Accords were signed, Mexico City, October 2002.

FIGURE 2. NUMBER OF MILITARY POSITIONS ACROSS CHIAPAS



The federal government’s repressive and co-optative efforts to control the spread of the movement resulted in inter- and intra-community conflicts. These hostilities reached a peak until December 1997, when 45 Zapatista sympathizers (mostly women and children) were killed by anti-Zapatista villagers in Acteal. Protests decreased significantly. Nevertheless, although in smaller numbers, protesters took to the streets again, now using roadblocks, seizures of building, and sit-ins to demand the recognition of the San Andrés Accords, the withdrawal of the army from the region, a stop in hostilities, and an investigation into the Acteal massacre.

During this same period, Chiapas experienced also electoral openings. Until 1994, the official Revolutionary Institutional Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI) had dominated the state. However, in the 1995 local elections, the party faced the first of many electoral defeats. The National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, PAN) won 4 municipalities, while the PRD won 18 localities. By 2001, the PRI had lost a total of 46 local governments to other parties.¹⁷ Initially, these openings generated great hopes for the advancement of the Zapatista agenda. Mobilization increased as a result.

In addition, the government of Chiapas underwent 6 different governors from 1994 to 2003. At the time of the uprising, Elmar Salazar was interim governor after governor Patrocinio González Garrido became Minister of the Interior (Secretario de Gobernación). In the aftermath of the Zapatista uprising, Elmar Salazar was replaced by Javier López Moreno on January 18,

¹⁷ Source: Instituto Estatal Electoral de Chiapas, <http://www.iee-chiapas.org.mx>.

1994. López Moreno governed until December 18 of that same year when Eduardo Robledo Rincón took office after winning the state elections under major allegations of electoral fraud. Due to strong dissatisfaction with his government, Robledo Rincón remained in power only until February 14, 1995, when Julio César Ruiz Fierro was appointed interim governor. After the Acteal massacre in December 1997, Ruiz Fierro was replaced by Roberto Albores Guillén. Finally in 2000, Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía was elected as the first non-PRI governor of Chiapas and was able to finish his term in 2006.

During all the PRI state governments, repression remained as one of the principal tools to contain the Chiapas conflict. However, great hope emerged when Salazar Mendiguchía was elected through a coalition formed by all the other parties (PAN-PRD-PT-PVEM-CD-PSN-PCD-PAS) against the PRI. Although an ex-PRI politician, Salazar Mendiguchía had been member of the COCOPA since its creation in 1994 and had participated in the elaboration of the Indigenous Rights Bill. These actions had granted him the trust of most social sectors in Chiapas.¹⁸

The victories of Pablo Salazar and Vicente Fox, also the first non-PRI candidate to the presidency in 2000, helped to resurrect Zapatista protest activity. Great hope for the movement's cause emerged after President Fox claimed to support the Indigenous Rights Bill that came out of the San Andrés Accords in 1996 and dismantled seven military positions around the Zapatista region of influence. However, this hopeful period of openings was short-lived. The end result of the deliberation of the Indigenous Law (Ley Indígena) in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies was a diluted version of the San Andrés Accords. Neither the Zapatistas nor the Indigenous Movement in Mexico accepted the approved bill (Velasco, 2003). All possibilities to resume negotiating talks faded away. The Zapatista wave of protest lost momentum, and the Zapatistas, feeling betrayed again, turned to the construction of their own vision of autonomous communities in the creation of the Councils of Good Government (Juntas de buen gobierno) located in the five Zapatista regional capitals, Aguascalientes, now renamed Caracoles. In January 2006, the EZLN launched 'The Other Campaign' (La otra campaña) aiming at constructing a national movement in favor of direct democracy.¹⁹

¹⁸ Author's interview with some of the Zapatistas advisors during the San Andrés Dialogues who were asked to become part of Salazar's administration, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, March 2003.

¹⁹ See <http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx>.

4. Methods

4.1. Data

4.1.1. Dependent variables

Protests: Weekly data on occurrence of protests were collected for the state of Chiapas, from January 1, 1994 to December 31, 2003 from local and national newspapers. Daily reports from La Jornada provided most of the data. However, additional reports from the local newspapers El Tiempo later called La Foja Coleta, and Cuarto Poder collected by Melel Xojobal²⁰ were triangulated to check for possible problems of selection and description biases (Earl, Martin, McCarthy and Soule, 2004). Protests varied from marches and roadblocks to land invasions, seizures of buildings, meetings, sit-ins, and strikes.²¹ The selection criterion for counting an event as a protest was defined by whether the event involved at least three people collectively critiquing or dissenting together with social or economic demands (Rootes, 2003). To avoid data inflation protest events were coded as only one protest even when these lasted various days. In the 520 weeks studied, there were 1491 protests, with an average of 2.86 and a maximum of 126 protests per week; and 211 weeks with no protest events.

A one-week lagged endogenous variable was introduced in the Poisson regression models to estimate possible ‘bandwagon effects’, as successful protest event are expected to trigger more protest activity in the future (Rasler, 1996).

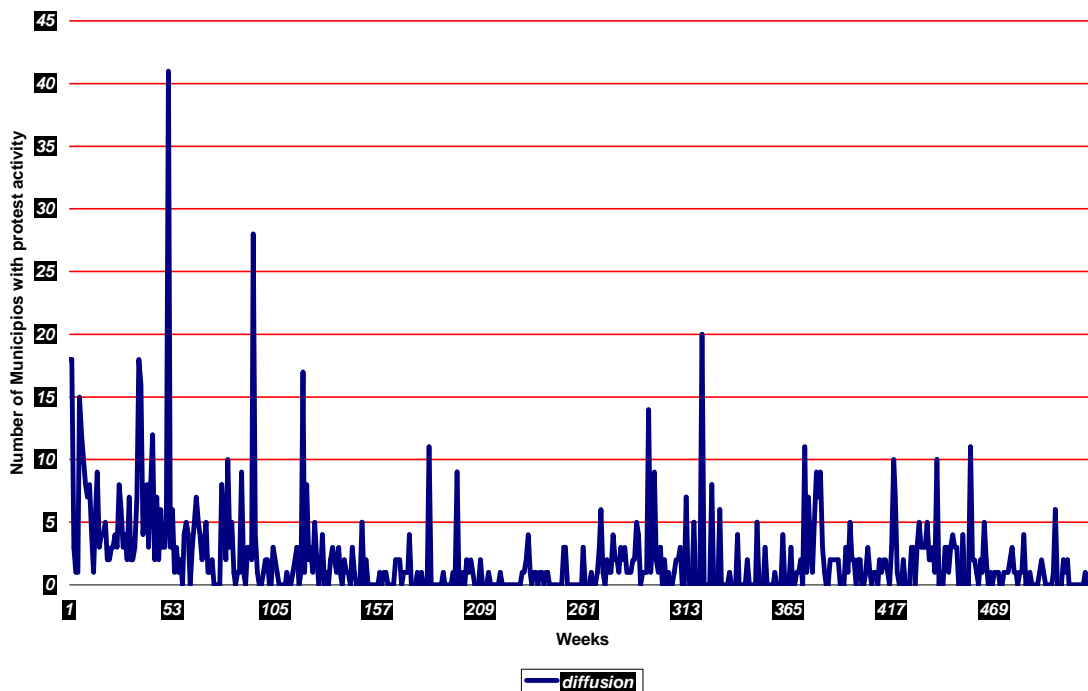
Protests’ Diffusion: Diffusion of protests is defined as the geographic spread of protest activity across the 111 *municipios* of Chiapas²² and is measured by the number of municipalities that experienced any protest activity in a given week. The maximum number of *municipios* experiencing protest activity in a given week was 41 with an average of 2.09. Figure 3 plots the number of *municipios* involved in protest activity for the studied period. A one-week lagged endogenous variable was also introduced in these models.

²⁰ Melel Xojobal is a social service organization founded by the Dominican Friars of San Cristóbal de Las Casas in Chiapas, on February 2, 1997 that has archived a daily synthesis of Chiapas news in local and national newspapers.

²¹ The results of this study show no risk of having different types of events aggregated in the analysis that could wash out the effects of political opportunities (Jenkins, Jacobs and Agnone, 2003; Meyer, 2004).

²² On July 28, 1999, seven new municipalities were created: Montecristo de Guerrero in the territory of Angel Albino Corzo, Aldama in Chenalhó, Santiago El Pinar in San Andrés Larráinzar, Maravilla Tenejapa in Las Margaritas, Benemérito de las Américas and Marqués de Comillas in Ocosingo and San Andrés Duraznal in Simojovel. These localities are not included because no data was available for them as separate *municipios* until 2000.

FIGURE 3. DIFFUSION OF PROTEST ACTIVITY OVER MUNICIPIOS IN CHIAPAS, 1994-2003



4.1.2. Explanatory variables

Concessions: Concessions are defined as governmental responses that were intended to accommodate demands of the opposition (Kitschelt, 1986), in this case, those of the Zapatistas. These include the release of political prisoners, mass pardons and amnesties, reshuffling of cabinet members, governors, and lower levels administrative personnel, and promises to respond to the movement's demands. To assess the short and long-term effects of this variable two lagged variables were created: $t-1$ and $t-6$ respectively, assuming that the effects could be observable up to six weeks after these concessions were granted.

Capacity of Repression: It is measured by the number of military positions and checkpoints. Increases in the military presence in the region are taken as increases in repressive threats to the Zapatistas. Especially if we consider that the army is not the institution in charge to police protest demonstration, it is clear that increases of military positions around the Zapatistas was intended to contain their influence in the region and increase the costs of their mobilizing efforts. Therefore it is considered a potential threat to the movement.

Yearly maps and reports of military positions and checkpoints were gathered from publications of the Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y

Políticas de Acción Comunitaria, CIEPAC, (Global Exchange and CIEPAC, 1999). Two lagged variables were created to measure the short ($t-1$) and long-term ($t-6$) effects of repression on the Zapatista cycle of protest. Because the long-term effects of repression threats are expected to be shorter than the long-term effects of active repressive measures an additional four-week lagged variable ($t-4$) was created to check for possible different effects. In any case, it is assumed that the long-term effects of increases in repression threats could be observable up to six weeks after those increases in repressive actions and/or threats.

Unfortunately, police reports on protest events are not public information, nor are data on arrests, military personnel, and military or police expenses. Thus, they cannot be used as measures of repression in Mexico as other scholars have done in studying repression of protests in other contexts (Earl, Soule and McCarthy, 2003). Newspaper reports on repression Zapatista protests were not precise or consistent. Thus, they cannot be considered as a reliable source either. Therefore the information on military positions and checkpoints is considered to be the best approximation available and a good measure for repression given that the military presence in the region was intended to weaken further Zapatista influence and therefore raise the costs of mobilization.

Governmental Inconsistency: An interaction variable between the weekly measures of concessions and repression was created. Following the same rationale used in the definition of concessions and repression, this variable was also lagged one period ($t-1$) and six periods ($t-6$) to estimate its short and long-term effects on future protest activity.

4.1.3. Control variables

Given that the movement occurred in a changing environment, this study takes the changing political conditions as control variables. These controls are intended to assess to what extent the movement reacted to concessions and repression and not to the changing electoral conditions in the region. Electoral openings are measured in two ways: by measuring the relative openness of the local political system and by looking at the competitiveness of elections. The relative openness of the local political system is assessed by identifying which party is in power and the competitiveness of elections is measured by electoral fragmentation.

Party in Power: Using party in power as a measure of openness is justified by the assumption that PRI governments were closed to the Zapatistas. A dichotomous variable was constructed to differentiate *priísta* from *non-priísta* governments every three years, according to the frequency of local elections in Mexico. To assess the short and long-term effects of this variable a one- ($t-1$) and a six-period ($t-6$) lags were included in the models. Data on parties in

power come from electoral results available from the Instituto Estatal Electoral de Chiapas (IEE-Chiapas, 2003).

An additional variable was created to assess the change in rule at the state level from PRI to the first non-PRI governorship in 2000, when Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía became governor. Here again this variable was lagged one ($t-1$) and six periods ($t-6$) to assess the short and long-term effects of it.

Electoral Openings: Using the same electoral data and Taagepera and Shugart's (1989) electoral fractionalization formula, I assess relative competitiveness of elections in the region. The fractionalization index is calculated by the following formula:

$$f = 1 - \sum(v_i^2)$$

where v_i is the proportion of votes won by each party²³

This measurement helps to identify the fragmentation of the electoral arena, and therefore, the competitiveness of elections. The higher the fractionalization index, the more fragmented the electorate and the more competitive the elections. One and six-period lags were included in the models to assess the short and long-term effects of this variable on protest activity and its diffusion.

4.1.4. Models

Given that the dependent variables consist of counts of Zapatista protests and number of affected cities per week, the most appropriate estimation procedures to follow are event-count models (Barron, 1992; King, 1989; Land, McCall and Nagin, 1996), as the number of protests (number of affected cities) is reported as an incidence rate of events over time. Four models were run, two for each of the dependent variables: protest activity and protest diffusion. Models 1 and 2 test the short and long term effects of concessions, repression, government inconsistent responses to the Zapatistas, and openness of the political system –measured by party in power in Model 1 and by the electoral fractionalization index in Model 2– on protest activity.²⁴ Results are shown in Table 1. Models 3 and 4 repeat the previous exercises replacing protest activity for protest diffusion as the dependent variable. Results are shown in Table 2.

²³ Local elections are held every three years.

²⁴ The rationale for running two models for each of the dependent variable lies in the potential multicollinearity problems that assessing the relative openness of the political system with two different variables could present.

5. Results

The analyses conducted in this study offer different results from the ones the literature has predicted. When considering the effects of repression in the absence of concessions, one can observe that repressive threats indeed had an initial negative effect and a delayed positive effect on protest activity and protest diffusion, which confirms Hypothesis 1 but does not confirm Hypothesis 2. These results show that Zapatistas were cautious when planning their future protests and protests appeared to have been well coordinated across localities. While initial increases in repressive presence in the region diminished protest activity after a six-week period Zapatista protesters were back on the streets across localities. Thus increases in military presence had a similar effect across localities, both in increasing protests and its diffusion. It is interesting to notice that the medium-term effects ($t-4$) of increases in repressive threats do not appear to be significant.

TABLE 1. POISSON MODELS FOR ZAPATISTA PROTEST ACTIVITY FROM 1994 TO 2003

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PROTESTS	
	MODEL 1	MODEL 2
Repression (t-1)	- 0.030 *** (0.011)	- 0.027 *** (0.011)
Repression (t-4)	0.003 (0.018)	0.002 (0.017)
Repression (t-6)	0.024 * (0.015)	0.023 * (0.014)
Concessions (t-1)	- 0.755 ** (0.396)	- 0.651 (0.423)
Concessions (t-6)	1.165 * (0.714)	1.265 * (0.715)
Inconsistency (t-1)	1.180 ** (0.594)	1.096 * (0.622)
Inconsistency (t-6)	- 0.979 (0.757)	- 1.078 (0.752)
PRI at the local level (t-1)	0.001 (0.015)	
PRI at the local level (t-6)	0.026 * (0.015)	
Electoral fragmentation (t-1)		0.182 (1.053)
Electoral fragmentation (t-6)		-2.950 *** (1.186)
PAN at the state level (t-1)	0.104 (0.825)	0.052 (0.822)
PAN at the state level (t-6)	0.556 (0.814)	0.271 (0.803)
Lagged dependent variable	0.040 *** (0.011)	0.039 *** (0.011)
Number of weeks: 514	Log likelihood: -1398.6209	Log likelihood: -1383.573

*** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10

TABLE 2. POISSON MODELS FOR ZAPATISTA PROTEST DIFFUSION FROM 1994 TO 2003

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PROTEST DIFFUSION	
	MODEL 3	MODEL 4
Repression (<i>t</i> -1)	-0.033 *** (0.011)	-0.030 *** (0.011)
Repression (<i>t</i> -4)	0.002 (0.017)	0.001 (0.017)
Repression (<i>t</i> -6)	0.027 ** (0.014)	0.026 ** (0.014)
Concessions (<i>t</i> -1)	-0.761 * (0.430)	-0.661 (0.448)
Concessions (<i>t</i> -6)	1.282 * (0.706)	1.378 ** (0.708)
Inconsistency (<i>t</i> -1)	1.168 * (0.625)	1.090 * (0.646)
Inconsistency (<i>t</i> -6)	-1.105 (0.752)	-1.198 (0.750)
PRI at the local level (<i>t</i> -1)	0.002 (0.015)	
PRI at the local level (<i>t</i> -6)	0.023 (0.015)	
Electoral fragmentation (<i>t</i> -1)		0.167 (1.060)
Electoral fragmentation (<i>t</i> -6)		-2.701 ** (1.177)
PAN at the state level (<i>t</i> -1)	-0.007 (0.772)	-0.058 (0.771)
PAN at the state level (<i>t</i> -6)	0.610 (0.763)	0.360 (0.753)
Lagged dependent variable	0.045 *** (0.013)	0.043 *** (0.012)
Number of weeks: 514	Log likelihood: -1216.4708	Log likelihood: -1204.5209

*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$

The results of the analysis of the effects of the use of concessions alone also disprove Hypothesis 3. When concessions were applied without increases in repression, they had a negative short-term and a positive long-term effect on both, protest activity and its diffusion. It was expected that concessions would have positive effects on protest activity in both, the short and the long-run. However, a week after concessions were given, protest activity decreased significantly. After the first concessions were granted, Zapatistas might have held hopes for further concessions. When they realized that these

were only procedural and were not going to bring further advances for the movement, protesters took their struggle back to the streets.

However, when concessions and repression were applied simultaneously shown by the interaction variable between concessions and repression, they produced first a significant positive short-term but a negative long-term effect on protest activity and protest diffusion. This disconfirms Hypothesis 4, which predicted that the inconsistent use of repression and concessions by the state would generate more protest activity and protest diffusion in the short and in the long term. Partial or procedural concessions combined with increases in military positions in the region should have increased the Zapatistas' frustration, which in turn should have triggered more protest activity. However, these results suggest that initially Zapatistas reacted as predicted. In the long term however, the frustration of not achieving any further concessions demotivated them to sustain protest activity. These last results however are not statistically significant. Nevertheless it is interesting to note the change in the direction of the relationship. According to Zapatista sympathizers, they got tired of not getting the government attention to their demands and therefore the Zapatistas decided to construct their autonomous authorities on their own.²⁵

The actual stage of the movement and its continuous rejection of resuming negotiations with the federal government confirm these findings. Ten years of protests, failed negotiations, and the Zapatista disillusion with the entire political system after the failure to pass the Indigenous Rights Bill as drafted by the COCOPA to honor the San Andrés Accords, made the EZLN and its support bases leave the streets and concentrate their mobilization efforts on a new form of organization. In 2003, the Zapatistas inaugurated their autonomous governments with the Juntas de buen gobierno and forgot about the dialogue with the state. The creation of parallel structures of government is not only another of the Zapatistas' strategy of resistance and lack of trust in the state institutions, but it explains why Zapatista protest activity lost momentum in 2003 while the movement is still alive in the Zapatista controlled communities.

The control variables also offer very interesting results as they disprove Hypothesis 5. Localities ruled by the PRI were more likely to experience more protest activities, with statistical significance only in the long run (Model 1). As elections became more competitive, that is as electoral fractionalization increased, protest activity decreased. These results show that although Zapatistas were mainly reacting to concessions and repressive threats directly applied to them, structural changes in the region were affecting their protest activities as well –especially in the long run. However, the change in rule at the state level showed a positive but not significant relationship with protest

²⁵ Author's interviews with members of Enlace Civil, International Service for Peace (SIPAZ), and the Regional Coordination Office of Civil Society Resistance of Los Altos in Chiapas, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, March 2003.

activity and its diffusion. These unexpected results might be due to the hopes that the government of Pablo Salazar brought for the movement. Although an ex-PRI politician, he was seen as somebody supportive of the San Andrés Accords and during his term the military presence in the region was reduced significantly.²⁶ The different effects of local and state level political conditions can also be explained by considering the different influence that political leaders at these two levels of government could have on the negotiations between the Zapatistas and the Mexican federal government. Openings at the local level signify the defeat of the PRI, the party in government against the EZLN launched the uprising in 1994. Thus protesters concentrated their efforts on targeting PRI ruled localities, while openings at the state level signaled the possibility of further substantial concessions granted by higher levers of government. Therefore protesters should have been encouraged to continue protesting. This, however, without statistical significance.

Finally, past protests significantly affected future protest activity as predicted by the bandwagon effects' theory (Rasler, 1996).

²⁶ According to a member of the Regional Coordination Office of Civil Society Resistance of Los Altos in Chiapas many NGOs supported Salazar's campaign in hopes of achieving real concessions. This information was gathered during an interview with the author, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, March 2003.

Conclusions

In general terms, these results support the arguments made by other scholars in that repression has an initial negative effect but a long term positive effect on protest activity (Opp and Roehl, 1990) –this however, only when the effects of repression are analyzed separately from the effects of concessions. Similarly when concessions are analyzed in the absence of repression, we can observe that they first had a negative effect and a long-term positive effect on protest activity. However, when these two effects are analyzed simultaneously, as Lichbach (1987), Rasler (1996) and Brockett (2005) have suggested, the effects of these two variables differ from the ones they would produce in the absence of one another.

This study shows that the inconsistent use of repression and concessions can have different effects on protest activities than the ones expected. When combined, increases in the repressive presence in the region and increases in partial or procedural concessions increased protest activity initially, however, as time passed, protests decreased across the entire state of Chiapas. These differences can be explained by clear variations in the type of repression and concessions applied by the Mexican state and by the special political conditions in which the movement occurred.

First, in the case of the Zapatista movement repression consisted mostly of repressive threats and not concrete repressive actions. Thus although this could have generated more protest activity, especially in the long run after protesters realized that the military presence in the region was not intended to police or stop protest events, the long-run decay in protest activity shows that the military presence combined with partial concessions effectively constrained the influence of the EZLN in the region by raising the costs of organization. Second, concessions granted by the Zapatistas were mostly procedural or partial, never substantial. The theory predicts that this would have generated more protest activity, however, in the case of the Zapatistas, as time passed these partial concessions combined with increases in military presence seem to have worn off the Zapatista protest enthusiasm as interviewees confirmed.

Most of these concessions were directed to manage rather than to resolve the conflict. In some Zapatista sympathizers' opinion these concessions had the intention to exhaust the dialogue and the movement.²⁷ Looking back at the turn that the Zapatista movement took after the passing of the Ley Indígena in 2001, one can understand that frustration rather than the use of repression and/or concessions made the Zapatistas stop their demonstrations as well as their negotiations with the government and drove them to construct

²⁷ Author's interviews with Zapatista advisors during the dialogues of San Andrés, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, February-March 2003.

their own autonomous authorities in 2003 and to engage in *the Other Campaign* in 2005 which advocates direct democracy and rejects political parties as the means of interests' articulation.

Third, the Zapatista cycle of protest occurred within the Mexican democratic transition. Electoral openings should have encouraged further protest activity. However, the results of this study show that electoral openings decreased protest activity, while the remaining PRI-dominated scenarios were attracting most of the protest activity. One explanation for these unexpected results is that Zapatistas might have been hopeful that the electoral democratization process in the country could open further institutional channels for the representation of their demands and therefore they concentrated their protest activity in the still remaining closed and repressive environments to press for their openings. A second explanation is that these electoral openings discredit Zapatista protest activity in the newly more democratic scenarios, and therefore Zapatistas concentrated their activities in the remaining PRI-controlled localities. In any case, it is unfortunate that electoral openings did not bring the expected opportunities to dissident voices, like the Zapatistas, and made the Mexican democratization an incomplete transition. The results of this have been the creation of parallel structures of authority in the region, a growing disillusion with political parties and representative democracy, the alienation of Zapatista communities, and the perpetration of the conditions in Chiapas that gave birth to the Zapatista uprising in 1994.

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